

## **Introduction: Distribution of Financial Support to Organizations Representing National Minorities**

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The four articles included in this Special Issue of the Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe are based on presentations given at the expert workshop on the Distribution of Financial Support to Organizations Representing National Minorities, organized by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) in Flensburg, Germany between 5-6 December 2013.

The workshop examined a set of issues related to the funding of national minority organizations (in the broader meaning of the term), such as minority parties, minority councils, minority associations, etc. The focus of the workshop was on the issue of funding as directed by states to minority organizations, thus enabling the participation of these ethnic groups to political and public life. The participation of national minorities to political and public life is to a great extent determined by the activity of ‘representative’ organizations, and funding is of fundamental importance for them to be able to function adequately. The amounts and manner of distribution of financial support, its uses, and the mechanisms in place to oversee the legality and transparency of its use are all important components in this process.

Given the centrality of the issue of funding for the participation of national minorities to public life, there is surprisingly little empirical research, policy analysis, or academic literature on the topic. One should however note the 2009 contribution of the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on Issues Relating to the Protection of National Minorities (DH-MIN), which drafted a questionnaire requesting information from member states on a range of topics related to the distribution, use, and auditing of this type of financial support. In 2010, following the receipt of answers from 23 member states, a compilation of these answers

was drafted and made public; however, with the DH-MIN discontinuing its activity in 2010, the analysis of the contents was not carried out. The DH-MIN initiative was meant to fill a gap in the knowledge and understanding of the mechanisms underlying the distribution of financial support to minority organizations in Europe.

In this context, the workshop organized by ECMI aimed to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and understanding of the issue of funding of minority organizations, by identifying areas in need of further research and initiating the creation of a framework that will allow for future comprehensive recommendations to governments in this respect.

The first article included in this special issue is based on the key-note speech given by the author, Detlev Rein, who refers to his experience as chairman of the DH-MIN during its efforts to collect information concerning the funding of minority organizations, and builds on the example of Germany and its practices in offering financial support to the various types of minority organizations on its territory. In the case of the funding of projects proposed by minority organizations, the author emphasizes the importance of understanding the various implications of a fair distribution of funds among the various minority groups, as well as the rationale of funding such projects, e.g. understanding how priorities are set and how minority needs can be best met. Concerning political participation, Rein stresses the importance of analyzing available funding by first looking into the types and roles of organizations existing in any state, such as private law associations of minorities; special associations, bodies and committees where minority questions are dealt with; and minority parties or associations running for seats in local, regional or national parliaments. In the absence of a clear methodological approach, an analysis of the funding available for political participation would not be meaningful. Finally, focusing on minority funding from an international perspective, Rein outlines the main aspects of the international legal framework concerning transnational funding for national minorities, reflecting also on their importance and applicability.

The next article in this special issue analyses the relationship between minority empowerment and the funding schemes available to minority organizations using the example of the state of Schleswig-Holstein, on the border between Germany and Denmark. Here Sonja Wolf argues that the funding scheme currently in place provides the organizations of the Danish minority with the possibility to provide constant and reliable services to the community, as well as the freedom to decide how to operate in the best interest of their community. The Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein can thus participate in and contribute

to public life in the region, formulate and develop a group identity, and nurture the minority's own culture and language. In this sense the funding available does contribute to the empowerment process of the community. Wolf argues that this funding scheme is shaped by the following four central elements that were identified to have an impact on the work of the organizations with, in, and for the minority: the stability of funds and institutionalization of procedures; the transparency of the funding scheme as well as of the use of funds; the administrative burden; and the funding channels. While conceding that her case study is limited and that the results do not allow for a generalization, Wolf argues that her enquiry opens up a number of questions that could inspire and inform future research on the subject, including research on other types of funding schemes used by states to support their minorities, on the elements that play a crucial role in these funding schemes, on measuring the impact of various elements of funding schemes, and very importantly on how data collection on funding schemes can best be carried out.

In the third article, Nurcan Özgür Baklacioğlu investigates the contemporary institutional and discursive novelties and challenges on the agenda of Turkey's policy towards its kin minorities, as well as its institutional and discursive transition from an ethnic nationalist kin policy in the Balkans towards a transnational economic and religious strategy prioritizing 'Turks abroad' in the EU. Özgür Baklacioğlu argues that since the 1990s, Turkey's kin policy has undergone four important changes: Turkey's policy definition of kin minority gained a predominantly religious and geopolitical content; while the Turks abroad were primarily seen as a political and economic diaspora, the kin minorities in the Balkans served as a cultural ground for Turkey's neo-Ottomanist policy of fighting radical Islamic movements in the region; the rise of the Diyanet (the Religious Affairs Directorate) as a chief actor in both kin and Turks abroad policies; and the application of the policies towards the "EuroTurks" policy to the kin minority policies in the Balkans. By analysing the policies and the funding made available for the Turkish minorities abroad, Özgür Baklacioğlu concludes that the strengthened role of the Diyanet as one of the main actors in Turkey's kin policy in the Balkans and Europe is a contemporary novelty, which in the author's view can be potentially controversial among both Muslim and non-Muslim populations in the region.

Szabolcs Pogonyi takes up the case of Hungary and also applies a transnational perspective on funding and policy towards kin minorities abroad, arguing that Hungarian diaspora engagement policies were designed by the Orbán government in order to strengthen the government's nationalist image within the homeland constituency. After reviewing the

main theoretical approaches to the study of diaspora engagement, Pogonyi focuses on the Orbán government's diaspora politics, in particular on the issue of non-resident citizenship. Pogonyi's main argument is that the introduction of the non-resident citizenship and the creation of new diaspora institutions were not motivated by geopolitical or economic purposes, but by a desire to strengthen the Orbán government's nationalist image within the country, in the context of the rise of the radical populist Jobbik party as a challenger to Fidesz. Through the inclusion of transborder and diaspora Hungarians into the citizenship of the country, Pogonyi argues that the Orbán government could then claim that it restored the unity of the Hungarian nation and, at least symbolically, undid the border changes of the 1920 Trianon Peace Treaty. Thus the author points towards the new diaspora policies and institutions (such as birthright travel programs and language courses) as means through which Hungarians abroad could become 'folklorized' and 'diasporized', rather than mobilized. Pogonyi concludes that in Hungary, the Orbán government chose to utilize the diaspora as a symbolic resource, underscoring the nationalist government's claim that it strives to maintain the Hungarian ethnocultural heritage throughout its diasporas.

The articles included in this Special Issue represent just part of the contributions made during the 2013 workshop on the Distribution of Financial Support to Organizations Representing National Minorities. They hopefully provide a basis for further research and scientific enquiry; as demonstrated during the workshop, there is a pressing need for developing research methodologies, for collecting data, and carrying out both empirical and theoretical research on the topic of funding of national minority organizations. In this respect, it is hoped the articles selected for publication here represent a good starting point for advancing knowledge on this very important topic.

## **Some Basic Questions Regarding the Distribution of Financial Support to Organizations Representing National Minorities**

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### **Abstract**

National minorities and their organizations need special funding by the responsible public organs and offices in order to be able to e.g. live their special customs, to learn and preserve their minority languages, and to exercise political participation. The cost of cultural life, self-organization and effective political participation per capita tends to be higher for a minority than for the majority population, when the former wants to reach and keep equivalent levels with the majority. Questions to be analysed are: who are the appropriate recipients of public financial means, by what methods and ways – national and international - can the funding take place and what are the well-understood safeguards in respect of the public interest in proper budget management. Last but not least the international law frame for special funding of national minorities has to be examined.

This article is based on a key note speech given to the participants of the expert workshop on ‘Distribution of Financial Support to Organizations Representing National Minorities’ held at the European Centre for Minority Issues in Flensburg, Germany, December 2013.

**Keywords:** Funding of minorities, organizations of minorities, project funding, political participation, minority parties, transnational funding, kin-states, bilateral treaties, Germany.

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## Introduction

The funding of national minorities and their organizations by the state is of high importance to them. And when they have achieved most of the basic rights which are guaranteed in the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (henceforth Framework Convention), the permanent financing of their undertakings is perhaps one of the predominant items of their activities in relation with the institutions and organs of the state. Two examples will illustrate this:

When the government of Schleswig-Holstein reduced the funding of the school system of the Danish minority in 2010 in respect of the 2011 budget very suddenly from 100 % of the costs of an average majority pupil to 85 %, quite a number of demonstrations took place in the settlement region of the Danish minority in Germany (Kühl 2012: 27).

In 2013 a scientific colloquium on Sorbian/Wendish items with the title ‘Money rules the world and makes it go round’ took place at the Brandenburg University of Technology at Cottbus, the biggest lower Sorbian city.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to the importance of the funding by the state from the point of view of the minorities, there is nearly no literature on this topic. Half an exemption can be found in the work of the late DH-MIN, the Committee of Experts on Issues Relating to the Protection of National Minorities under the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH). Inter alia DH-MIN had the tasks

...To act as a forum for the exchange of information, views and experience on policies and good practices for the protection of national minorities ...” and “...to carry out a reflection on transversal issues relevant to Member States... (DH-MIN(2006)022, Appendix 1)

According to these terms of references, the elaboration of actual academic analyses on quite a number of topics of interest to all or to some member states was begun by sending out questionnaires to the member states and publishing the answers. One of the questions was ‘Do you distribute public subsidies to national minorities’ associations? Which budget (national, regional, local) is used for this purpose?’

This was also one of twelve questions in a questionnaire<sup>2</sup> by the DH-MIN, which agreed in 2008:

...to discuss the distribution of public financial support for projects concerning persons belonging to national minorities and their associations, and to hold ... an exchange of views on the existing practices, criteria and models in this field. In addition, it decided to examine the draft questionnaire...(DH-MIN(2008)007, p. 4)

The questionnaire was answered by (only) 23 member states of the Council of Europe, and the answers were published in 2009 (DH-MIN(2009)007 rev 2). As the DH-MIN was suspended in 2010 (Rein 2013: 229-31), unfortunately no analysis of the collected material took place. But it seems that this collection of factual and legal data is the only one dealing with the subject of this article. And some material on the topic of this article can be found in the context of two other questionnaires of DH-MIN.

With no intention to discuss the definition of a 'national minority', this article only deals with national minorities that are recognized in a given state as a national minority in the interaction between that state, the minorities and their organizations, and the bodies of the Framework Convention resp. the Council of Europe European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (henceforth Language Charter). The important problems – not only with regard to financial support – when this triangle is not given, are kept out by this limitation. If, for instance, a state does not accept the concept of special protection of national minorities and of positive action according to Article 4 of the Framework Convention, the problem of financial support is secondary.

Additionally, the legal and factual situation of minorities, which live in regions of a territorially defined partial autonomy, where most of the inhabitants are – on the level of the nation state - members of a minority, will not be discussed. Prominent examples are the Åland Islands, South Tyrol and the German-language community in Belgium.<sup>3</sup> The parliamentary and governmental bodies of such regions have many possibilities to distribute financial support according to the priorities of the minority which forms the majority of citizens and voters in that region.

The subject of distribution of financial support to organizations representing national minorities shall be considered under the following topics:

- Funding of projects proposed by minority organizations,
- Funding and political participation,
- Minority funding in an international perspective,
- The international law framework for the funding of minorities.

## **1. Funding of projects proposed by minority organizations**

### ***1.1. Equation of the members of a minority and any organization***

Identifying the members of a minority and any organization presents a problem when considering the funding of minority organizations.

In contrast to a civil law association, with its membership defined by accession of persons known by name, there are no lists of members of a minority in many countries in Europe<sup>4</sup> and not even precise figures on its size. According to Article 3 Paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention, every person belonging to a minority has the right to choose freely to be treated or not be treated as such. Germany, for instance, could not consider collecting any such data due to basic legal considerations. In addition to Article 3 Paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention, also the Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations of 1955,<sup>5</sup> Article 8 of the EU Data Protection Directive<sup>6</sup> and national provisions render this impossible. The final statement on this matter of the German Government in its comments in 2002 to the first opinion of the advisory Committee on Germany is worded:

Bearing all of these facts in mind, the Federal Government does not intend to collect any statistical data on persons belonging to national minorities, especially since none of the national minorities have yet expressed, to the Federal Government, the wish that any such data be collected (GVT/COM/INF/OP/I(2002)008, p. 8).

The members of a minority may be members of a minority association, but they are not obliged to be. According to Article 3 Paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention one may explicitly confess to being a member of a national minority, but one can also keep it secret. And lastly, there may be concurring civil law associations to one minority in the same country.<sup>7</sup>

### ***1.2. Figures regarding the size of a minority and of the membership of minority organizations***

Figures regarding the size of a minority and of the membership of a minority organization would be very helpful when the state has to decide on a fair division of the available subsidies within the public budget and of appropriate costs of an undertaking in relation to the size of the supported group.

This question needs not be discussed deeper, but it must be kept in mind, when it comes to the satisfaction of the needs of a minority not by direct actions by the public administration but by funding minorities to run projects or even long term undertakings such as the running of a private minority school.



### ***1.3. The rationale of funding of national minorities' enterprises***

The next question could concern the rationale of funding of such enterprises. The members of a minority and the majority are inhabitants and citizens of a given state to which on the one hand they pay taxes and social charges, and which on the other hand offers services of general interest to everybody. The streets, the airports, the railways or the buses are to serve everybody, whether members of the majority or minorities. And lastly, both majority and minority members can take part in the elections on all levels and thus are actors in the realization of the principle that all state power emanates from its citizens.

The members of a minority have an identity which differs from that of the majority. They are characterized, for instance, by a language of their own, by a special historical consciousness, by the compliance of specific traditions or the close mental kinship to a kin-state.

The members of the minorities argue that because of this specific identity they have specific needs, which cannot be satisfied by the general public services and financial assistance from public funds, but demand special expenditures.

Often they wish school teaching of and in their minority language; therefore perhaps special schools or classes are required, dormitories at secondary level schools and specific teacher training.

Teaching pupils of minorities is *per se* more expensive than teaching majority pupils, because the minority language is taught in addition to the state language and the usual foreign languages. According to the number and regional distribution of the minority members the classes are often smaller, which has influence on the ratio of teachers to pupils, and also the school transport might be more expensive.

There are quite a number of such needs of the minority which – regarding the number and settlement structure of minority members – can only be satisfied by higher per capita expenses. To take for example the daily newspapers of some minorities: ‘Serbske Nowiny’ of the Sorbs in Germany, ‘Flensburg Avis’ of the Danish minority in Germany, and ‘Der Nordschleswiger’ of the German minority in Denmark can only be published because they receive public funding.<sup>8</sup>

Further cultural necessities might be directed towards libraries, museums, theatres and operas. Social necessities may aim at kindergartens, retirement homes and social services that use the minority language. But even the wishes of different minorities in one country may

differ distinctly, which can be demonstrated by some examples from Germany: dance- and music theatre is only important to the Sorbian People,<sup>9</sup> a school system run by a civil law association is only prioritized by the Danish minority,<sup>10</sup> to the German Sinti and Roma the presentation of their history of persecution is a basic need,<sup>11</sup> the North Frisians and the Sorbian People put much emphasis on the further research and development of their languages, which are spoken nowhere else, by scientific institutes,<sup>12</sup> whereas the Danes – having very strong relations to a kin state – can have recourse to the linguistic and didactic scientific efforts in Denmark, while the German Sinti do not even wish to have a publication nor any public use of their language at all.<sup>13</sup>

To examine the details of the different wishes and needs of minorities in any given country gives an impression of the complicated situation when the state has to decide on the funding of very divergent projects of perhaps very different costs and very different terms of duration. This might be also important for the decision regarding whether long-term basic and perhaps institutional subsidies or short-term project subsidies are appropriate measures.

#### ***1.4. Bureaucracy***

As the minority organizations have to deal with public administration and therefore with bureaucracy, the question of the form of funding will come up after the questions towards the appropriateness of funding – to some administration officials the formal aspect comes first. The relevant questions on that point and some answers can be found in the questionnaire of the DH-MIN.<sup>14</sup> They regard the form of the request and the decision, the bookkeeping and auditing, and the monitoring of the results.

## **2. Funding and political participation**

This subject can be approached in a twofold manner: on the one hand there is the question of how the political participation of minorities is funded, and on the other hand one can ask in what manner the minorities participate in the making of decisions in the field of minority funding.

### ***2.1. Funding of political participation***

With regards to the first question, perhaps three subgroups must be analysed:

- The funding of private law associations of minorities, which more or less represent a given minority - on a democratic basis and by number of their members - and can

transfer, on that basis, their wishes and demands to the public entities; and which are also the recipients and administrators of public money earmarked for minority projects and long term undertakings.

- The funding of special associations, bodies and committees, where minority questions are dealt with, either among minority associations on a national or international basis or where they meet with representatives of the political or administrative spheres.
- The funding of special minority parties or associations running for seats in local, regional or national parliaments, perhaps according to special favourable conditions in the electorate system.

There is a rising complexity of problems in the order of these three sub-items:

#### *Funding of private law associations*

It is the predominant situation in most of the European countries to have one or more civil law associations bringing together members of a given minority. In contrast to the first item of this article, here we are not dealing with the funding of short or long term projects but with the funding of the association itself, for example for running headquarters with employees, reimbursing travel expenses, distributing news to the members, paying advocates to be advised in case of conflicts with the state and so on. One basic question is how representative such an organization is with regards to a minority, what portion of self-financing by membership fees can be expected, which undertakings and expenditures should be subsidized, should the funding follow a project or an institutional scheme, and how the proper use of the funding is audited and evaluated in the end.

#### *Funding of special associations, bodies and committees*

Some examples from Germany are the following:

On the one hand there are associations and institutions, which receive funding and are run by the national minorities themselves: the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) and the Secretariat for Minorities (Minderheitensekretariat). The latter represents all federal associations of minorities in Germany. Its task is to promote the circulation of information among the two chambers of the Parliament, the Federal Government and national minorities, to improve coordination among national minorities on federal policies, and to inform the interested public about minorities in general. Further, the Secretariat for Minorities receives and coordinates comments of the

individual national minority associations addressed to official national and international organizations (e.g. Council of Europe, OSCE).

On the other hand there are commissions which are run by the public administration, where the attending representatives are entitled to travel allowances. Such bodies are the yearly 'Implementation Conferences' on the Framework Convention and the Language Charter, and the minority specific Consultative Committees at the Ministry of the Interior. Some information on the funding of such committees between the minorities and the state may be found in the 'Compilation of replies to the questionnaire on the consultation mechanisms concerning national minorities', where the answers of 25 member states of the Council of Europe to a questionnaire of the DH-MIN are collected.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Funding of minority parties running for elections*

The third sub item seems to be the most complicated: the funding of minority parties and their running for elections. Even without considering the regulations for parties of minorities, one can find a broad diversity in Europe already. And when one does consider the special regulations for the participation of minority parties in elections and representation in parliaments, one can find an astonishing set of solutions. DH-MIN decided in 2005 to work on the subject of electoral systems, party law and the protection of minorities. Information was requested from all member states of the Council of Europe, but only nine replied.<sup>16</sup> Of those nine, only Germany's contribution contained information on funding minority parties. The DH-MIN asked David Hine to prepare a report on the matter, and this report only contained information about concrete findings on the funding of minority parties in the German case (DH-MIN(2009)013final). So the particularities of the German case in providing better funding to minority parties than to other parties should be roughly sketched, confined to the federal level:

Within the legal system of the Federal Republic of Germany, the protection of national minorities also finds expression in the federal electoral law and the law on political parties. The Federal Electoral Act states that political parties of minorities are exempt from the five per cent clause for parliamentary representation; according to this clause, political parties can enter the Bundestag only if they receive at least five per cent of the second votes or win a direct mandate in at least three constituencies. But under the Federal Electoral Act, this principle does not apply to political parties of national minorities.<sup>17</sup> The Federal Electoral Act also contains special provisions for parties of national minorities regarding the nomination of district candidates<sup>18</sup> and state party lists.<sup>19</sup> The Political Parties Act<sup>20</sup> also takes into account

the special situation of parties of national minorities. According to the Act, these parties may claim government subsidies even if they do not receive the usually necessary share of votes, as specified in the Act.<sup>21</sup> Further, parties of national minorities have certain privileges with regard to fundraising from foreign sources.<sup>22</sup> With these provisions, the Federal Electoral Act and the Political Parties Act take into account the fact that, precisely due to their minority status, the parties of national minorities may not be in the same position to win votes and financial support on the same scale as other political parties. These provisions therefore do not constitute preferential treatment - in the legal and narrower sense of the word - for the parties of national minorities, but rather represent an attempt to compensate for the difficult situation of such parties.

#### *Participation of minorities in decision making in the field of funding*

It is quite understandable that minority organizations wish to decide themselves as much as possible what concrete undertakings the public funding earmarked for them should be used for. However the public administration is responsible to the respective parliament and the parliament is responsible to the people for public money to be used economically and effectively. So a way must be found between the minorities' wish for self-determination and the duty of the administration to control public expenses. Again an example from Germany:

The Sorbs are a Western Slavic people living exclusively in Germany, specifically in the federal states of Brandenburg and Saxony, and speaking languages, Upper and Lower Sorbian, which cannot be found anywhere else. Government grants allocated to the Sorbian institutions are distributed via the Foundation for the Sorbian People (Stiftung für das sorbische Volk), a foundation under public law established in Saxony by an inter-governmental agreement between Brandenburg and Saxony.<sup>23</sup> Based on a co-funding agreement, this Foundation is jointly financed by the Federal Government and the federal states of Brandenburg and Saxony, and distributes these funds to civil society associations and Sorbian cultural institutions that are registered corporations under German trade law, such as a music theatre (Sorbisches Nationalensemble) and a publisher (Domowina Verlag), owned by the Foundation.<sup>24</sup>

The Foundation is of particular importance with regards to the cultural interests of the Sorbs, because it decides how much of the annual budget will be spent on the different undertakings in, among other things, scientific research, professional theatre, amateur music associations, a daily newspaper, the production of books, and the organization of big public

events. The distribution of the financial means for undertakings of and for the Upper Sorbs in proportion to the Lower Sorbs is a permanent aspect of the decisions to be made.

The main parameters of the Foundation's activities and its annual budget are decided by the Foundation's Board of Trustees. Its 15 members include six representatives of the Sorbian people, two members each of the Federal Government, Saxony, and Brandenburg, as well as three regional/local representatives of public administration. Habitually, the board members sent by the administrations do not intervene in the decisions on the priorities of the Sorbian People, but they intervene when the wishes of the Sorbs would exceed the given budget or be otherwise unlawful. In its opinion on Germany's first State Report in 2002, the Advisory Committee to the Framework Convention came to the conclusion that this Foundation made "a highly positive contribution as a fine example of good co-operation between the federal authorities and the Länder for the benefit of national minorities". The Advisory Committee noted nonetheless,

...that only six of the 15 members of the Foundation's governing board are representatives of the Sorbian minority - the others belong to the majority. The Sorbian members therefore represent less than half of the board and have no right of veto, even on fundamental issues. The Advisory Committee considered that the authorities should examine ways of strengthening the representation of the Sorbian minority in the functioning of the Foundation and in other fora. (ACFC/INF/OP/I(2002)008, No. 65)

### **3. Transnational funding of minorities**

#### ***3.1. The breaking down of the Iron Curtain at the end of the 1980s***

It sounds contradictory, but despite growing prosperity all over Europe there is a growing interest in and actual realization of transnational funding of minorities. There might be two main reasons for this: one is the breaking down of the Iron Curtain at the end of the 1980s, and the other one is the quite important increase in the number of states in Europe since then. During the Cold War it was nearly impossible to fund a kin-minority from west to east over the Iron Curtain. This became possible at the end of the eighties. The increasing number of minorities in Europe was the result of the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union was followed by 14 successor states, Czechoslovakia by two states, and Yugoslavia by six to seven, depending on whether you regard Kosovo as a state (Caruso 2013). During the same period from 1989 until today there was only one reduction in the number of states in Europe, namely by the German reunification. Through the dissolution of states, two effects occurred. One was that an existing

kin minority in one state was divided into many kin minorities in the succeeding states. For example, there was one German minority in the Soviet Union before 1990, and afterwards there were German minorities in 11 of the successor states. The other effect was that in the dissolved states new minorities came into existence – for example two new minorities were born by the separation of Slovakia from Czechia: Czechs in Slovakia and Slovaks in the new Czech Republic. So around 1990 there was quite an increase in the number of minorities with kin states in Europe.

### ***3.2. The reasons for transnational funding of a kin-state minority by its kin state***

But what are the reasons for transnational funding of a kin-minority by its kin-state? From the point of view of the funded minority the motivation is quite clear: minorities are nearly always and everywhere short of money to realize their basic needs and their wishes above the basic needs, so they will always welcome a kin-state delivering money across the border.

There seem to be two sets of motivations from the point of view of the funding state, those that are officially named and those that are secret. Official justifications recall historic developments as a lost war or the result of a referendum, for which this part of the population has to suffer over-proportionally. The motivations that are not spoken of might look to the future, where one day there might be a faint possibility of a reunification with the separated kin, irrespective of the 11<sup>th</sup> recital of the Framework Convention to respect the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of states.

### ***3.3. Three levels of the mode of transnational funding of minorities***

So as it might be a delicate subject to judge the motivations of foreign governments, only some examples from Germany are to be cited here, showing a development at three levels:

#### *Clandestine funding*

The author has heard, but did not yet find any documents to confirm that in the first years after the Second World War, German Minorities in France and Belgium were sponsored by Germany by taking money in big suitcases secretly across the borders. But this is not the method of transnational funding of minorities to be discussed for the present and the future.

#### *Principal understanding of two states*

A very early official document from the times after World War II on transnational funding of minorities are the “Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations”,<sup>25</sup> which are, to cite the former German

chancellor Gerhard Schröder in the foreword of a scientific book published on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declarations,

...extraordinary in their unusual formal character: no bilateral treaty under international law was conducted, instead both heads of government unilaterally gave declarations of intent, which were confirmed shortly thereafter by the respective national parliaments (Schröder, 2005: 11).

One of the articles of each of these Declarations reads as follows:

The special interest of the Danish minority in fostering contacts with Denmark in the religious and cultural as well as in specialist fields shall be acknowledged.

and vice versa in the Danish Declaration.

These harmless wordings in two texts, which are not a bilateral treaty but (only) two nearly synallagmatic declarations, form the basis for funding the respective minority on the other side of the common border. The minorities receive an amount of money yearly, which they use *inter alia* for purposes of their administration, running their private law minority school organizations, and many cultural undertakings. The party of the German minority in Denmark, which, according to Danish law, is not obliged to be an organization separated from the minority civil law association, takes a share of the German funding of the German minority organization. According to the German Political Parties Act, the political parties must be separate organizations from other associations, so the Danish party can't take a share of the general funding of Denmark for its minority in Germany. However, the Political Party Act contains a special permission that minority parties may be funded by donors in neighbouring countries.<sup>26</sup> This is the legal basis for the funding of the Danish party in Germany, which received about 458,000€ in recent years from a ministry of the Danish Government (BT-Drs. Drucksache 18/4301, p. 237 ff).

There is no established regular contact between Denmark and Germany on matters relating to minorities and their funding, however when intensive contacts are needed, the Governments take appropriate measures by installing working groups or direct meetings on very high levels.<sup>27</sup>



### *Bilateral treaties containing the recognition of the minority, and the establishing of a joint commission*

The third level was reached by Germany, and perhaps a number of other states, when it became possible to conclude Neighbourhood or Friendship Treaties between the states of the former NATO and the former Warsaw Pact. In the 1990s Germany concluded such treaties - containing rules in respect of the German minorities in the respective countries - with 16 states of Central and Eastern Europe and of Central Asia, from Belarus to Ukraine, from Lithuania to Tajikistan.<sup>28</sup> None of the treaties is equal to the others, but all of them have wordings recognizing the German minority, and some of them contain rules on the establishing of a joint commission on cultural matters in general or on minority questions in particular. In the meetings of such commissions the annual economic plan of funding the respective German minority by Germany is discussed and approved; similar issues are dealt with in direct talks with the relevant embassy or from ministry to ministry without an underlying clause in any treaty.

#### ***3.4. Transnational funding of churches***

A very special form of appearance of transnational funding is that of the protestant minority communities in North-Schleswig and South-Schleswig:<sup>29</sup>

The 'Nordschleswigsche Gemeinde', a free church according to Danish church law, is funded by the 'Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Norddeutschland', which is a public law corporation sui generis according to German law. The 'Nordschleswigsche Gemeinde' serves the rural minority population, whereas in the four cities of North-Schleswig priests of the German minority are employed by the 'Folkekirken', which receives funding from the Danish state.

The 'Dansk Kirke i Sydslesvig' is funded to provide the salary of the priests by 'Danske Sømands- og Udlandskirker'. By far the greatest part of their expenses are covered by fund raising and by contributions from its congregations, while the Danish Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs gives a grant that covers a substantial part of salary expenses.

## **4. The international legal framework for the funding of minorities**

### ***4.1. Funder and recipient reside in the same state***

The question of funding national minorities is answered differently by the European states depending on whether the funding of national minorities and their languages is permitted or

even obligatory. Some of them, including the EU members France and Greece, which are not member states of the Framework Convention,<sup>30</sup> follow the opinion that the mere practice of non-discrimination norms is enough, and that no special standards are required in the case of minorities.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast to that position, 39 European states have ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and thereby consented to its Article 4 Paragraphs 2 and 3, which read:

2 The Parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

3 The measures adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 shall not be considered to be an act of discrimination.

From the point of view of the organizations of the national minorities, the problem with the Framework Convention is that the verbs in the phrases, according to which the state should fund undertakings, are fairly soft, for example: ‘...in order to facilitate...’<sup>32</sup>, ‘...shall, where appropriate, take measures in the field of...’<sup>33</sup>, or: ‘...undertake to promote...’<sup>34</sup>

It also must be kept in mind that Article 13 of the Framework Convention states that the exercise of the right of the minorities to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments shall not entail any financial obligation for the member states.

Besides the Framework Convention, there exists another European instrument to protect the National Minorities, which is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ratified by 25 states. Fields of practical action to foster the languages of national minorities are described more concretely by this Charter, but the wordings on the duties of the State are as vague as in the Framework Convention, for example:

...the Parties undertake... to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:...to encourage ... and foster, ...to ensure, ...to promote, ...to encourage and/or facilitate, ...if necessary, to create and/or promote and finance,...undertake, if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage and/or provide...<sup>35</sup>

So at least a justification for the funding of national minorities with a wide margin of appreciation for the states about the concrete funding can be found in international law.

## ***4.2. Transnational funding***

The Framework Convention is also the source for a European norm regarding transnational funding of minorities. According to Article 17 Paragraph 1:

The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.

And according to Article 18 Paragraph 1:

The Parties shall endeavour to conclude, where necessary, bilateral and multilateral agreements with other States, in particular neighbouring States, in order to ensure the protection of persons belonging to the national minorities concerned.

One will perhaps raise the question of the importance of the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations of the High Commissioner for National Minorities of the OSCE (OSCE 2008) in this context. The author does not give them a high ranking in the sphere of standard setting documents, as these recommendations were not elaborated together with government representatives and have not passed any examination or voting by international bodies, and experts were only invited on a personal basis, not representing any bodies.<sup>36</sup> In view of the Bolzano Recommendations the author would like to cite Martin Luther's grading of the Apocrypha books of the Old Testament: 'These are books, though not equivalent to the Holy Scriptures, nevertheless valuable and good to read.'<sup>37</sup>

## **Concluding Remarks**

The European law on the protection of national minorities allows the special funding of national minorities, as well within the state, where the minority settles, as well as transnationally. The Framework Convention and Language Charter welcome such financial support and encourage it, although with restrained formulations.

The task of the state is to recognize the special needs of the national minorities and to support them adequately with financial means. It is in the interest of the minority

organizations to explain their financial wishes to the public organs and offices in charge of budgets in a continuous dialogue, and when planning and realizing their activities to observe the respective rules concerning the efficiency and economy of the use of those means, provided by the taxpayers.

The task of the sciences dealing with national minorities is to build a bridge between the spheres of the national minorities with their specific needs and those public bodies in charge of the administration and distribution of public means by empiric research and theoretical foundation, thereby observing and imparting the international examples of good practice.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See Rein (2014) p. 72-79.

<sup>2</sup> All questions are reprinted in the Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> The latter is, despite its perhaps misleading name, a territorially defined autonomy, because it is geographically defined, and the government of the community has power over all persons resident in this defined region and under certain circumstances over all persons present in that region. According to the Prime Minister of the German Language Community, this Community can be compared to the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany; see Lambertz 2005, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> For exemptions see: Detlev Rein, *Gewährung des Status einer öffentlichen-rechtlichen Körperschaft an nationale Minderheiten?* ECMI Working Paper #76 (May 2014), p. 19f.

<sup>5</sup> Full text at the European Centre for Minority Issues:

<http://www.ecmi.de/about/history/german-danish-border-region/bonn-copenhagen-declarations/>.

<sup>6</sup> Directive 95/46/EC of 24 October 1995 on the Protection of Individuals with regard to the Processing of Personal Data and on the Free Movement of Such Data.

<sup>7</sup> See for example in Germany the situation of the associations of Sinti and Roma in: Federal Ministry of the Interior (2010), p. 23–27.

<sup>8</sup> ‚Serbske Nowiny‘ by Germany and the Länder Brandenburg and Sachsen via the Foundation for the Sorbian People, ‚Flensburg Avis‘ by the Kingdom of Denmark and ‚Der Nordschleswiger‘ by Germany.

<sup>9</sup> Sorbisches Nationalensemble in Bautzen.

<sup>10</sup> Run by Dansk Skoleforening for Sydslesvig e.V. with 46 schools and 57 kindergarten (2015); see Dansk Skoleforening for Sydslesvig e.V.:

<http://www.skoleforeningen.org/deutsch>.

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- <sup>11</sup> Especially at the Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma at Heidelberg.
- <sup>12</sup> Nordfriesisches Institut at Bredstedt, Sorbisches Institut at Bautzen and Cottbus.
- <sup>13</sup> See regarding the situation of Romani in the Federal Land of Hesse, in which Romani is protected according to part III of the Language Charter: Fifth periodical report of Germany presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in accordance with Article 15 of the Charter 2013, p. 74 f.
- <sup>14</sup> See Appendix.
- <sup>15</sup> DH-MIN(2005)010; The relevant question was: ‘What is the situation with regard to the resources allocated to the advisory bodies/consultation mechanisms (finance, staff) and what is the source of funding (central/local authorities, mixed funding)?’
- <sup>16</sup> DH-MIN(2006)002
- <sup>17</sup> Section 6 (3) second sentence, Federal Electoral Act of 7 May 1956, Federal Law Gazette 1956, I, p. 383 ff., revised by promulgation of 23 July 1993, Federal Law Gazette 1993, I, p. 1288 ff., 1594; last amended by Article 9 of the act of 31 August 2015, Federal Law Gazette 2015, I, p. 1474).
- <sup>18</sup> Section 20 (2) third sentence.
- <sup>19</sup> Section 27 (1) fourth sentence.
- <sup>20</sup> Political Parties Act in the version of 31 January 1994, Federal Law Gazette 1994, I, p. 149 ff., last amended by Article 1 of the Act of 23 August 2011, Federal Law Gazette 2011, I, p. 1748 ff.
- <sup>21</sup> Section 18 (4) third sentence.
- <sup>22</sup> Section 25 (2) no. 3 b.
- <sup>23</sup> All legal texts regarding the Foundation for the Sorbian People can be found at their website at [http://stiftung.sorben.com/wobsah\\_de\\_42.htm](http://stiftung.sorben.com/wobsah_de_42.htm).
- <sup>24</sup> For further details on the organization and funding of Sorbian activities see Rein (2015)
- <sup>25</sup> See note 7.
- <sup>26</sup> See note 23.
- <sup>27</sup> Both ways were taken in the above-mentioned situation when the Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein very suddenly reduced the per capita funding of the private Danish school association from 100 per cent of the expenditures of an average majority pupil to 85 per cent. See: ‘Bericht der dänisch-schleswig-holsteinischen Arbeitsgruppe zur Behandlung von Gleichstellungsfragen in der Finanzierung der Schulen der dänischen und deutschen Minderheiten’, (2010); Kühl, (2011) p. 308–314.
- <sup>28</sup> See Anna Fontaine, Detlev Rein, Article 17-18, Germany, recital 8 ff in: Hofman et al (2015).
- <sup>29</sup> On the history and present situation of both communities see: Pedersen (2005), p. 91-137, 107 f, 126 ff.
- <sup>30</sup> On the non-members of the Framework Convention see: Hofmann (2015).
- <sup>31</sup> On this controversy see Rein (2013) with further bibliographical references.
- <sup>32</sup> Article 9 Para 4.
- <sup>33</sup> Article 12 Para 1.
- <sup>34</sup> Article 12 Para 3.

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<sup>35</sup> Article 12 Para 1.

<sup>36</sup> See Phillips (2001: 111); Emma Lantschner regards them nevertheless as part of the soft jurisprudence of the HCNM and as standards of the OSCE: Lantschner (2009), p. 42 f.

<sup>37</sup> Die Bibel, oder die ganze Heilige Schrift alten und neuen Testaments nach der deutschen Übersetzung D. Martin Luther's (1837) (Part I) Die Heiligen Bücher des Alten Testaments, p. 447 („Apocrypha: Das sind Bücher, so der Heiligen Schrift nicht gleich gehalten, und doch nützlich und gut zu lesen sind.“)

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## Appendix

### **Questionnaire on the ‘distribution of public financial support (subsidies) for projects concerning persons belonging to national minorities and their associations (organizations)’**

**(DH-MIN(2009)007 rev 2**

1. Please give the following information for each national minority:

- description/name and size of the national minority;
- number of minority associations receiving subsidies per year (including umbrella associations).

2. Do you distribute public subsidies to national minorities’ associations? Which budget (national, regional, local) is used for this purpose?

3. Who determines the total amount of the subsidies to be distributed to national minorities’ associations (parliament, public administration)?\*

4. Which criteria is used to determine the amount of the subsidy for each national minority association? Is the number of persons affiliated with a national minority one of the criteria?

5. Who decides on the allocation of the subsidy to a minority association within a national minority and are there any criteria, priorities or guidelines or advisory bodies?

6. Is the distribution of subsidies made by public administration, outsourced institutions or by minority associations? Which advantages or disadvantages are associated with your own national system; which experience have you encountered and what should be avoided?

7. Is the distribution of these subsidies made by a contract or by a formal decision of an authority?

8. Please indicate the purpose(s) of the subsidies. Which targets/priorities are favoured when attributing subsidies? Are there any guidelines for national minority associations and/or public administration or institutions which grant the subsidy contract or subsidy decision?

9. How concrete should the subject/object/topic of the financial support request be? Is there a distinction between basic subsidies and project subsidies? In the affirmative, please clarify.

10. Are the minority associations obliged to set up corresponding financial accounts? When, to whom, and in which manner (submission of invoices or only written reports or both)? Is the

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reporting controlled by the same authority or institution which is responsible for the subsidy contract or decision?

11. Are the lasting results, success, and efficiency of the subsidy awarded to minority associations evaluated?

12. Is public administration, or the institutions which are responsible for the subsidy contracts or decisions audited? Are there any reporting duties for public administration or institutions responsible for awarding these subsidies with regard to concrete actions (e.g. to the parliament, Audit Office or internal revision department)?

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\*Please specify only the organ responsible for determining the amount of the subsidies, and the procedure followed. Do not indicate the amount of the subsidies. Please do not include information on the financing of the education system for minorities.

## **The Funding of Minority Organizations in Schleswig-Holstein: A Source of Empowerment?**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper analyses the relationship between minority empowerment and the funding schemes available to minority organizations using the example of the state of Schleswig-Holstein, on the border between Germany and Denmark. This is done through an examination of the organizational network available to the Danish minority in the region and the state funding structures available to these organizations, as well as through interviews with representatives of the two major organizations of the minority. I will argue that the existence of institutional funding on the one hand and empowering minority organizations on the other reinforce each other and that therefore the establishment of an institutional funding system for minority organizations can have an empowering effect on national minorities. Additionally, I will identify the central elements of the funding scheme at hand and discuss their influence on the empowerment process of the minority.*

**Keywords:** Minorities, funding, empowerment, German-Danish border region, Schleswig-Holstein, minority issues, Danish minority

The funding of minority organizations is an issue that tends to spark heated debates and often leads to entrenched positions and hard feelings at opposite ends of the negotiation table. Nonetheless, it has so far rarely incited research (Cârstocea, 2014). This may be due on one hand to the lack of information that is available from both the states and minorities involved, and on the other to a lack of motivation and methodology to gain the necessary information on the side of the researchers. This paper argues that despite these obstacles there are good reasons to research the funding of minority organizations as it can pose a source of

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empowerment for minority communities, not only in the amounts of money provided but also in the way in which funding schemes are structured. The example of the Danish minority in Germany's northernmost federal state, Schleswig-Holstein<sup>1</sup>, is one which has been used as a model in academic literature on minority issues countless times and may therefore have somewhat lost its appeal to researchers. However, with the shift of paradigm in minority research over recent years away from advocacy and protection towards issues of empowerment (Malloy, 2005, 2010, 2014; Schaefer-Rolffs, 2014; Banducci, Donovan & Karp, 2004; Henrard, 2005), the research of this particular minority setting is gaining in significance once again. As the study of settings in which empowerment occurs is one way of gaining an increased understanding of empowerment (Rappaport, 1981: 15), studying minorities that contribute to society and influence policies concerned with their affairs can give us an idea of how processes of empowerment can be triggered and advanced in other cases. The Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein is generally regarded as quite advanced in its empowerment process (Schaefer-Rolffs, 2014: 89; Teebken & Christiansen, 2001: 43; Köhl, 2004: 575; Schaefer-Rolffs & Schnapp, 2013: 4), thus providing a setting worth studying in order to understand minority empowerment processes.

Leaning on definitions of empowerment from the field of community psychology as provided by Rappaport (1981, 1987), Zimmerman (2000), and Sadan (1997), minority empowerment can be defined as a process of transition in a minority community from a situation of powerlessness to a position of relative power and control over community affairs, including the authority, ability, and self-perception to influence the environment in the community's favour and thus become an agent of its own change. It aims at the enhancement of the choices that can be made by the community, increased access to resources and information, and finally the institutionalization of this change and thus independence from helping systems. The change intended by processes of empowerment affects the relations within the community, between the community and the individual, between the community and its environment, between organizations within the community, and between the organizations of the community and the institutions of the broader society and works in consideration of them. The activities and responsibilities in and for this process are mutually held between the state authorities and the minority communities or their representative organizations. The organizational structure available to the minority community, strengthening the community within and representing it to the outside in political as well as civic terms, thus makes for an integral part of minority empowerment.

The Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein is generally perceived to be in a favourable position in the society, economy and politics of the region, in good part due to its strong organizational network (Kühl, 2005: 78-79; Minderheitensekretariat, n.d.; Schaefer-Rolffs, 2014). A competence analysis of 2007 even pointed out that the institutions and organizations of the minorities<sup>2</sup> contribute to the linguistic, economic, political, and cultural profile of the state of Schleswig-Holstein (European Academy, 2007). The first section of this paper therefore describes the network of organizations available to the Danish minority, arguing that it is in an advanced position in its empowerment process precisely (partly) because of this organizational network. The following section is used to describe the funding scheme that is available to the minority organizations and how they are making use of it. The focus of this section is on public funding, as this is one of the ways in which public authorities exert their influence and measure support. It will be argued that not only the amount of money provided for the activities of the organizations but also the way in which the funds are being made available have an influence on the empowerment of the minority communities represented through the organizations. The third section will extend this argument into a more general setting and provide a discussion of elements within the funding schemes for minority organizations that might have a significant influence on the empowerment of minority communities.

### **1. The minority organizations network in Schleswig-Holstein**

The Danish minority has been defined as a national minority since the plebiscites of 1920, held in order to define the border between Germany and Denmark. While Danes and Germans had been living with relatively little nationalistic tensions alongside each other in their autonomous region under the King of Denmark for centuries, the 19th century marked a period of conflict and rising nationalisms culminating in several wars and the establishment of national borders (Lars N. Henningsen, 2011: 11-48; Teebken & Christiansen, 2001: 14-23). The two groups understood each other as different national groups with corresponding loyalties, and the re-definition of the border following the plebiscites left members of each group on the respective other state's territory. An understanding of the groups as national minorities thus developed, which led to the formation of organizations concerned specifically with their affairs soon after the drawing of the border. These organizations have developed, evolved and multiplied over time and today an extensive network of various organizations is available to both minorities (Teebken & Christiansen, 2001: 14-23). The Danish minority in

Schleswig-Holstein lives alongside the German majority population but also two other minorities: The Frisian ethnic group and the Sinti and Roma. Both these groups are recognized minorities, enjoying special protection and promotion through the Schleswig-Holstein state constitution (Schleswig-Holstein State Parliament, 2014: Article 6). These groups are, however, not part of this study and will therefore not be considered in more detail.

In his work Schaefer-Rolffs (2014: 93-99) draws a direct connection between the organizational framework available to the Danish minority and the advanced position in the empowerment process that it enjoys, and points out that those organizations run by members of the minority themselves enjoy a larger degree of trust than those that are not. Accordingly, he concludes that real empowering effects are only reached by organizations that are run by the minority, as opposed to organizations or institutions initiated and run by the government or members of the majority population. While one could argue that those political institutions and instruments still work for the minority and in the case at hand proved to be a quite effective tool of representation, the process of empowerment is by definition a process involving the minority in an active way. Thus organizations can only add to the empowerment process if they include the minority and put its members in charge of tasks and activities. Accordingly, all institutions and activities not including members of the minority need to be seen as mere protection and advocacy. Therefore they fall outside the scope of consideration of this paper and will be described only briefly at the end of this section.

The Danish minority organizations and associations are tied together under the umbrella of the *sydslesvigske samråd* (Southern Schleswig Council), coordinating issues of common interests of the Danish library, church, school association, health service, newspaper, central cultural organization, political party, youth association and the Frisian Association (*sydslesvigske samråd*, n.d.). The *samråd* is a conglomerate of equal peers in which questions of common interest are discussed, but decisions are not binding for the partnering organizations. It does not have a hierarchical structure and defined decision-making processes, nor does it have command over funds (*sydslesvigske samråd*, n.d.; living diversity, 2014). The main cultural organization of the Danish minority, and umbrella organization of 24 other cultural associations, is the *Sydslesvigsk Forening* (SSF, South Schleswig Association). It is organized in local chapters, each with their own secretary, and while primarily being a cultural organization it also advocates for minority issues and represents minority interests in political contexts. It was founded soon after the final revision

of borders between Germany and Denmark, in 1920 (Schaefer-Rolffs, 2014: 90; Sydslesvigsk Forening, n.d.).

Alongside the SSF there is a large number of other cultural associations available to the Danish minority such as Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslesvig (Danish Library for Sydslesvig), Borgerforeningen Flensborg (Citizen Association Flensburg), Den slesvigske Kvindeforening (Women association of Slesvig), and Flensborg Journalistforening (Journalist association Flensburg). Additionally, the *Dansk Sundhedstjeneste for Sydslesvig* (Danish Health Service for South Schleswig) provides the members of the Danish minority with social and health services in addition to the public system (Koch, 2015; Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2014: 16-18).

The Danish minority also runs a youth association, called *Sydslesvigsk danske Ungdomsforeninger* (SdU, South Schleswig Danish Youth Association), responsible for all youth work within the community and sponsor of a number of sporting clubs, youth organizations, and activity centres (Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig, n.d.). Additionally, the minority runs its own political party, the *Südschleswigscher Wählerverband* (SSW, South Schleswig Voters Association). The SSW is another main recipient of public funds among the minority organizations and due to its exemption from the normal 5% threshold in state elections represented in the state parliament for several years. Since 2012 the SSW forms part of the governing coalition in the state of Schleswig-Holstein (Schaefer-Rolffs, 2014: 91; Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2014: 16-18).

Finally, the minority also runs a school association called *Dansk Skoleforening for Sydslesvig* (Danish School Association). It is responsible for the schools and nurseries of the minorities, in which the language of instruction is Danish. The minority schools have the status of private schools but enjoy special provisions concerning their funding, providing them with subsidies from the educational funds of Schleswig-Holstein. The minority schools issue diplomas equivalent to public schools and their syllabi must meet the national standards (Schaefer-Rolffs, 2014: 90; Teebken & Christiansen, 2001: 77-79; Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2014: 16-18).

Through their activities, these organizations create opportunities for the members of the minority to participate in and contribute to the cultural life of the region, the civic organizational diversity, the sporting life, political decision making processes, the linguistic profile and the economic cross-border activities of the region. They thus offer opportunities

to interact with and shape the environment of the community in order to create a favourable atmosphere of co-existence and co-operation. Additionally, the organizations create forums for members of the minority to meet and discuss their struggles and issues, form and recreate structures, enjoy culture, share experiences of differentness from the majority, formulate political and economic interests and standpoints and thus help create a common identity and nurture the group's culture. They strengthen the internal cohesion and the self-esteem of the group and offer platforms for individual members to assume leadership roles among their peers, advancing their individual empowerment processes and thus creating reservoirs of future empowerment. In short, they support and enable the empowerment process of the community.

In addition to the organizations set up and run by the minority itself, there are a number of institutions that were initiated by the authorities of the host and kin-state of the minority. In most cases they function as liaison institutions and political representations. These institutions include the *Beauftragter für Fragen der Minderheiten und Kultur des Landes Schleswig-Holstein* (Commissioner for Minorities and Culture of Schleswig-Holstein) at the state level, the *Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Aussiedlerfragen und Nationale Minderheiten* (Commissioner of the Federal Government for German and National Minorities), the *Beratender Ausschuss für Fragen der dänischen Minderheit beim Bundesministerium des Innern* (Advisory Committee for Questions Regarding the Danish Minority in the Ministry of the Interior) at the federal level, and *danske generalkonsulat* (Danish Consulate General) as well as the *Udvalget vedrorende danske kulturelle anliggender in Sydslesvig* (Committee concerning Danish Cultural Activities in South Schleswig) with the Danish parliament (Schaefer-Rolffs, 2014: 91-93; Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2014: 59-62).

While these bodies do contribute to the empowerment of the minority in that they represent its interests and thus help shape the community's environment, they do not put the minority itself in charge. They act as bodies of protection and advocacy from the outside but do not add to the internal dimension of the empowerment process. They are therefore left out of the further considerations of this paper.

## **2. Minority funding in Schleswig-Holstein**



In order to be able to function as the catalysts of empowerment they are understood to be, minority organizations need funds. While in this particular case study the members of the minority are generally perceived as equal to their majority peers in socio-economic terms, this is not a typical situation for minorities across Europe. Many minorities are economically and socially marginalized and struggle for subsistence, which precludes them from raising the funds for their activities among themselves. Additionally, especially in the case of small communities such as the Danish minority, the funds that can be raised within the community are limited and often times do not cover the costs for administration and activities of organizations. Many states provide some funding to minority organizations, in order to enable them to do work in and for their community and thus support its empowerment process. The funding schemes available for minority organizations reach across a plethora of possibilities and, while the money provided does of course provide the organizations with possibilities to work for their communities, the structure of the funding schemes may have an even larger impact than the amount (provided that the amount of funding is sufficient to operate at all) (Cârstocea, 2014). In accordance with this consideration, this section is dedicated to a detailed description of the funding scheme available to the Danish minority organizations in Schleswig-Holstein and the analysis of the impact of their structure on the empowerment process of the minority in question.

The central recipients of public funds on behalf of the Danish minority are the school association and the SSF as the community's main cultural organization. Other organizations receiving funds directly from German public authorities include the Danish library and the youth association SdU. Other cultural associations and organizations are funded through the subsidies of the SSF (Jens Christiansen, Interview April 23, 2015). The main focus of this section will be therefore on the SSF and the school association as the two central recipients of public funding.

The SSF generated a total income of €5,567,750 in 2013 and is calculating a budget of €5,327,183 for 2015. Of the 2015 budget, 9.1% of the income is provided by the state authorities of Schleswig-Holstein, 2.2% by local authorities, 60.8% by the Danish Ministry of Education, 1.3% by the Danish Ministry of Culture, and 26.7% of the budget are generated through other sources (Sydslesvig Forening, 2015: 5). The largest share of the funds is institutionalized, reaching 80%-90% of the annual budget. The amounts provided are negotiated on a yearly basis, starting usually around mid-year. It is worth noting that the German Federal Government does not extend institutionalized financial support to the SSF,

but rather offers the opportunity to apply for project funding, especially in relation to construction and maintenance of buildings. These project applications are generally confirmed in due time before the project's beginning and in many cases extend over a period of more than a year (Jens Christiansen, Interview April 23, 2015). Accordingly, time and capacity-consuming project applications do not have to be compiled every year for funds issued by the Ministry of the Interior (Jens Christiansen, Interview April 23, 2015).

According to SSF Secretary General Jens Christiansen, the current funding structure of the SSF is a great advantage for the minority as it provides the organizations working for it with the possibility to decide for themselves how to best use their funds, instead of them being bound to specific projects. Not only do they thus have the possibility to employ an extensive staff in order to be in close contact with the members of the minority, but they can also initiate own projects as they deem fit for the minority. One example of this practice is the annual meeting of the minority, organized by the SSF. This event has a longstanding tradition and is seen as a cornerstone of cultural life in the minority. It is used to inform the community about new political developments, and to bring the members of the minority together to nurture Danish culture and language as well as the feeling of belonging to the community (Jens Christiansen, Interview April 23, 2015). In this sense the annual meeting is central to the community's identity and without institutionalized funding it would be doubtful if it could be held every year, as a project application might be rejected. In contrast to this, one of the association's institutions, the Danevirke Museum, is funded purely on project basis and funding applications have to be filed on a regular basis. Christiansen refers to this as "hard work" without which running the museum would not be possible. Due to this funding structure the staff at the museum is confronted with great insecurity, and an institution serving the education of the public about German-Danish history is constantly in danger of closing (Jens Christiansen, Interview April 23, 2015).

The SSF consists of the General Secretariat as well as local associations, working in the municipalities with Danish population in Schleswig-Holstein. Additionally, several smaller cultural associations are part of the SSF network and funded through the subsidies received by SSF. The SSF thus also functions as a distributor of the funds granted to the Danish minority by the state of Schleswig-Holstein. On the one hand, this structure means that organizations are available to the members of the community locally and close by, making it easy for members to address them and express support or dislike of the policies and activities of the associations (Jens Christiansen, Interview April 23, 2015). On the other hand

this means that it may be difficult to pool the interests of the various organizations and to speak with one voice when it comes to political and public debate. However, while different organizations are available to the minority members, they are dependent on the SSF when it comes to funding. This leads to the question of whether the funding scheme in place fosters democratic structures within the minority in which real opposition to the major cultural organization is possible, or if it potentially creates a tendency for smaller organizations to agree with the SSF's standpoint despite opposition by its members, due to their dependency on the funds distributed by SSF. The strong democratic traditions inherent to the Danish culture, along with a respective comment of the Secretary General in the interview conducted for this paper, indicate that opposition is taken by local SSF branches as well as other associations of the network and that democratic structures among the organizational network of the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein are maintained and nurtured. However, a funding scheme in which one organization functions as the distributor of public funds potentially limits the democratic effects of an existing broad organizational network, as it creates dependencies which might silence oppositional voices.

The Danish school association generated an income of €107,658,000 in 2014, of which 48.9% were subsidies from the Danish government, 34.3% were subsidies from the education funds of Schleswig-Holstein (Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig: 6) and 26.8% were generated through fees paid by parents, municipalities and other sources (Ilka Börnsen and Olaf Runz, Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig, Interview May 5, 2015). As education is dealt with on state level in Germany, the federal government does not regularly subsidize the Danish schools in Schleswig-Holstein. However, between 2010 and 2012, the Schleswig-Holstein government implemented severe cuts in the funding of the minority schools, parts of which were compensated by the federal government (Kühl, 2010). The Danish school association receives the subsidies for the minority schools according to the expected overall number of pupils for a year. The funding is issued in monthly payments in order to match the expense structures of the organization (Ilka Börnsen and Olaf Runz, Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig, Interview May 5, 2015). The funding from the Schleswig-Holstein state government is provided in the form of a pupil expense ratio, on an equal level to that of a pupil in a public school.<sup>3</sup> The equality of funding between the Danish minority schools and German public schools was integrated into the Schleswig-Holstein state constitution in 2014 (Schleswig-Holstein State Constitution, 2014: Article 12). The largest part of the funding of the school association is institutionalized and stable, providing the organization with a long-

term perspective in its activities (Ilka Börnsen and Olaf Runz, Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig, Interview May 5, 2015).

The current funding structure of the Danish school association is key for its ability to provide the children of the Danish minority with education in their native language. As education is a permanent activity rather than a project, it is necessary for the operator of schools and childcare facilities to rely on funding for more than just the next defined period. Institutionalized funding with stable amounts is the only way to ensure quality education enabling minority youths to compete with their majority peers (Ilka Börnsen, Olaf Runz, Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig, Interview May 5, 2015). So far, the Danish school association has needed project funding from public funds only for construction and renovation works, however from 2017 these expenses will also be covered by a standardized subsidy through the Schleswig-Holstein payments (Ilka Börnsen, Olaf Runz, Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig, Interview May 5, 2015). In comparison to a funding structure which is mainly based on project-funding, this structure means a relatively light administrative effort, allowing the organization to direct its resources towards the original purpose of the organization: to run and administer the educational system of the minority. Due to the constitutionalization of the funding equality of Danish schools and its further embedding in law, the amounts to be expected and the issuing procedures of the funds are very transparent for the school association (Ilka Börnsen, Olaf Runz, Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig, Interview May 5, 2015).

The school association is required by law to publish yearly reports about funding sources and expenditure, making them available to its funders, its constituting community and the broader public. Additionally, the Schleswig-Holstein state authorities regularly review the legal use of funds. According to the financial officers of the Danish school association this auditing is very time consuming and thus takes away from the administrative ease of the general funding structure, especially as the process is required both for the Danish public funds received<sup>4</sup> as well as the German public funds. While the process is understood as a necessity in order to guarantee transparency to the taxpayer, it still binds resources that are needed for other tasks, causing delays and other issues. A considerable bureaucratic burden is also connected to the share of funds that is provided by the municipalities for the operation of the kindergartens. Extensive reports on expenditure are requested for these funds, and the administrative effort to access the respective funds are larger than for other funds (Ilka Börnsen, Olaf Runz, Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig, Interview May 5, 2015). As

pointed out above, these measures aim to provide transparency for the way in which public funds are used. However, the purpose of the financial support of the state to minority organizations would of course be defeated if the administrative burden connected to accessing the funds and auditing procedures reached a point at which more staff and time is devoted to these administrative tasks than to the original purpose of the organization itself. While this does not seem to be the case in the setting at hand, it could be a potential pitfall in the design of public funding processes.

The current funding structure for the school association of the Danish minority is recurring and seems to be stable in its legal groundwork. However, the constitutional dimension of the funding of minority schools has been introduced only recently, and even with the current structure there is a remaining degree of risk for the minority. While the funding is calculated according to the calendar year, the school year goes from August to July and does thus not match the financial year. Accordingly, at the time the school year is being planned, including pupil numbers, staff needed, etc. the beginning of the financial year is still several months away. This does not normally pose a problem in any way, however in 2010 when the subsidies to minority schools were reduced this also started with the respective next financial year, with the school year already planned according to the budget that was originally expected. The cuts thus hit the school association in the middle of the school year, leaving it with little chance to adapt its expenses in time (Ilka Börnsen, Olaf Runz, Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig, Interview May 5, 2015). The constitutionalization of the equality in funding of education has dramatically increased the stability of the funding since, and the likelihood of a repetition of these events can be deemed small; however, the occurrence has left the minority with a bitter aftertaste and a very clear picture of the insecurities stemming from the way in which public funding is provided to its organizations. Additionally, even though the introduction of the equality in funding to the state constitution makes it much more difficult to make changes to the current arrangement, it is not a guarantee that they will go untouched in the future. In this case the problem remains that the planning unit of the organization, i.e. the school year, is not aligned with the financial year.

The above account of the public funding scheme for the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein paints the picture of a stable, reliable and institutionalized system which enables the two main organizations of the community to provide constant and reliable services to their constituency, make their own decisions concerning the activities they want to conduct or support, and represent the community's interest in the respective forums. The

structures and procedures of the funding scheme seem transparent, and both amounts and legal conditions are known in advance to the organizations and transparency of the organizations' expenditure is demanded. This enables the constituency of the organizations to make educated decisions concerning their support for the organizations at hand. However, the funding scheme in place might foster undemocratic organizational structures within the minority by channelling large parts of the funds through SSF. Additionally, the administrative effort connected to expenditure reporting might grow into a burden to the organizations, keeping them from their actually intended work. Nevertheless, the interviews conducted with representatives of both organizations make clear that the structure of the public funding scheme available to the organizations of the minority is the key to their ability to operate at all as well as in the specific ways they do.

### **3. Minority empowerment and funding**

In the case of the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein, there seem to be four main elements in the structure of the public funding scheme that exert a noticeable influence on their work. These include:

- Stability of funds and institutionalization of procedures
- Transparency of the funding scheme as well as the use of funds
- Administrative burden
- Funding channels

While the study of one individual case naturally does not allow for generalizations, it is still possible to derive core elements that can inform future research and inspire discussion. Accordingly, I do not claim this list to be exhaustive or universal, but rather understand it as an indication for future research. For this purpose I will discuss each element in detail in a more general perspective, considering especially possible tensions between them.

The stability of funds and institutionalization of procedures is manifested in the case of the SSF in yearly negotiations regarding the amounts of funds available to the minority, starting around the same time each year and including the same actors. For the school association the subsidies for the schools depend on the number of pupils registered and are thus known as soon as school registration closes, rendering negotiations unnecessary and providing the school association with prior knowledge about the exact amount of money provided to them. This arrangement is fixed in the constitution of the state, making sudden

changes to this system rather unlikely. In a contrasting model, the funding could be purely project based, with a budget for minority related or even general cultural projects to apply to. In this case the organizations would have to plan their activities as projects and apply for funding for each project, making it impossible to know how much money will be available to the organization at any time and which projects would be possible to realize. Staff contracts would therefore have to be limited to the period of an approved project and even very relevant and important activities might not be realized because they do not get the necessary funding. Permanent services such as health and counselling services or education would be very difficult to provide under these circumstances. Such a funding scheme would thus translate into a large degree of insecurity for the minority community as well as staff members of minority organizations, and would constitute a method of censorship of activities through the government. In contrast, the funding scheme at hand provides the organizations with the possibility to be a permanent partner, service deliverer, and employer for the community as well as with the freedom to make their own decisions concerning their activities, allowing them to tailor them to the needs of the minority. However, as pointed out earlier in this paper and demonstrated by the 2010-2012 funding crisis of the Danish minority schools, even a system perceived as stable may be vulnerable to economic fluctuation. One way to ensure that minority organizations are not hit harder by economic crisis than other publicly funded bodies could be to set a fixed share of the public budget aside for them. Such a fixed share would guarantee greater financial stability than a system that includes yearly negotiations. Additionally, embedding financial agreements in law or even in the constitution, as in the case of the Danish school association, further protects the financial standing of the minority.

The transparency of procedures is closely interconnected with the stability and institutionalization of funding in this case. As the procedures are the same every year, the organizations know when to expect negotiations and payments as well as how negotiations are conducted. In case of the school association the constitutionalization of the pupil expense ratio increased transparency again and provides the organization not only with knowledge of how to access funds, but also what amount of funding to expect. In a case in which the procedures and requirements to access funds are unknown to the minority organizations, they will face insecurity concerning their activity planning and might end up using their resources ineffectively because energy and effort are used to find out how to go about funding negotiations or might even be invested in negotiating with the wrong actors. This could be

especially severe in a funding scheme that is largely based on project funding. If organizations do not know where to apply for funding, which documents and forms are needed, or if they are eligible for specific funds at all, their resources might be wasted in drafting unsuccessful applications. Knowledge of the relevant information in order to draft successful applications or lead successful negotiations for funding can therefore be decisive in the performance of a minority organization and thus for its contribution to the empowerment process of the community.

To demand transparency of expenditure is a general feature of public funding in Germany. All publicly funded institutions and organizations have to publish a financial report laying out how funds were generated and used. This measure aims to prevent corruption and fraud, but it also enables the constituency of an organization to decide whether or not to support an organization in the future. This is especially important in the case of minorities, as in their case funding is often extremely limited and wasteful, corrupt or other fraudulent behaviour would drain those resources even further. Such behaviour therefore has the potential to severely harm or even halt or prevent the empowerment process in that it decreases the ability of the organization to act in the best interest of its constituency. In addition to potentially revealing fraud and corruption, mechanisms of transparency on the spending end also enable the members of the minority to grant or withdraw their support to an organization based on an evaluation of the way in which it spends its money. Furthermore, minority organizations do not only have a vital role in the internal dimension of the empowerment process of the minority but also represent the minority towards the majority population. Ongoing fraud and corruption will therefore not only harm the reputation of the organization but will likely fall back on the reputation of the community as a whole. Being involved in a corruption scandal can thus harm the empowerment process of the minority in that it creates a negative image of the community and thus influences the environment of the community in a negative way.

The administrative burden connected to public funding is an issue that might be problematic not only for minority organizations but other publicly funded organizations as well. This might especially affect small organizations, as they have fewer resources to reserve for administrative work connected to funds. In extreme cases, organizations might be unable to carry out the activity for which funding is requested due to an excessive amount of paper work. In the case of the Danish minority, the administrative effort is mainly connected to financial audits and, while being troublesome at times does not generally impede the work



of the two major organizations. However, a funding scheme in which funds are mainly issued on project basis might create a considerable amount of administrative work not only due to financial audits, but also in the application process for funds. The latter is also connected to the transparency of procedures as the administrative work can be handled in an effective and efficient way only if the application requirements and details are known to the organization prior to starting the process. Accordingly, an opaque funding application process potentially adds to the administrative effort of an organization. Another aspect that might add to the administrative burden of an organization are expenditure transparency mechanisms as discussed in the previous paragraph. While this type of transparency can contribute considerably to the empowerment of a minority, it can just as well slow it down if it increases the administrative burden of the minority organizations in an unfeasible way. This aspect affects the empowerment process of a minority in that an organization spending the largest part of its energy and effort on administrative tasks is unlikely to be able to meaningfully work for or represent the community.

Large parts of the funds for the Danish minority are channelled through the SSF as the minority's main cultural organization. I have pointed out earlier that this has the potential to create undemocratic organizational structures within the minority as it puts the SSF in a position of power over the smaller organizations that are funded through this channel. These organizations as well as individual members of the organizations might therefore refrain from opposing certain positions or activities of the SSF out of a fear of losing funds. Such an occurrence would silence sections of the minority and exclude them from debate and identity building, thus hindering the empowerment process. Additionally, if funds are focussed on a small number of relatively large and established organizations, it might be difficult for new organizations to form and gain a foothold in the community, as they lack funds for meaningful activities. However, there is a likelihood of sections of the minority not feeling represented by the established organizations or of a new organization having more relevant activities planned than the established one(s). In both such cases empowerment could be compromised. At the same time, a very large network of diversified organizations could unnecessarily drain the funds that are available to the minority, rendering the share provided to each organization too small to be able to act as a catalyst of empowerment.

Additionally, this aspect touches upon the sources of funding that are being made available to the minority organizations. In the case at hand, the institutionalized public funding through the state and municipal authorities of Schleswig-Holstein are only one

channel through which the organizations can access funds. They are also allowed to make use of public funds from the Danish government, create their own income through membership fees, accept donations, and apply for project funds. This structure enables them on the one hand to access overall larger amounts of funds, and on the other to diversify the risk of dependence. The importance of this factor became especially apparent in the 2010-2012 funding crisis of the minority schools, in which eventually the federal government of Germany paid compensations to the school association to keep the schools operative (Kühl, 2010). Furthermore, the yearly budgets of both the school association and the SSF are heavily subsidized by Danish public funds, reaching 48.9% and 60.1% respectively (Sydslesvigsk Foreningen, 2015: 5; Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig: 6). These percentages are high enough to conclude that without this support, large parts of the work of both organizations could not be sustained any longer. A multiplicity of funding sources therefore potentially advances the empowerment in that it provides the minority with essential additional funds as well as increased financial stability. However, an extensive number of funding sources, especially involving two different legal systems, might also impede the transparency of income generation, as well as increase the administrative burden for the organization. While preparing the documents for one financial audition is already a considerable amount of work, having to do it for two different auditing systems at once as in the case of the Danish minority organizations (Ilka Börnsen, Olaf Runz, Dansk Skoleforeningen i Sydslesvig, Interview May 5, 2015) increases the administrative workload substantially.

As pointed out in the beginning of this section, the elements discussed here do not comprise what I believe to be an exhaustive list. It is likely that different aspects influence other settings, and clearly the overall structure of society and the position of the minority in society influence many details of the funding schemes themselves. Nonetheless, these elements seem to be influential in the specific setting of the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein and might thus be a starting point for future research concerning the relationship between minority empowerment and minority funding schemes.

## **Conclusion**

This paper provides an overview of the minority organizations supporting the empowerment of the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein and the public funding scheme available to these organizations. The funding scheme currently in place for this purpose provides the

organizations of the minority with the possibility to provide constant and reliable services to the community as well as the freedom to decide on their own how to operate in the best interest of their community, thus offering ways to participate in and contribute to public life in the region, to formulate and develop a group identity and nurture the minority's own culture and language. In this sense it does contribute to the empowerment process of the community. Four central elements shape this funding scheme and were identified to have an impact on the work of the organizations with, in, and for the minority:

- Stability of funds and institutionalization of procedures
- Transparency of the funding scheme as well as of the use of funds
- Administrative burden
- Funding channels

These elements could be a first point of consideration for future research concerning the relationship between the empowerment of minority communities and the structure of public funding schemes for minority organizations. Of course the present case study is limited and the results therefore hardly allow for a generalization, however, it does open up a number of questions that could inspire and inform future research on the matter, such as: What other types of funding schemes are being used by states to support their minorities? Which elements are central in these? How can the impact of individual elements of funding schemes be measured? And, most importantly, how can information about these funding schemes be accessed?

The case study used in this paper was a comparatively simple one to carry out, as the organizations of the Danish minority are generally open about their affairs and a certain degree of transparency concerning their finances is legally required. Accordingly, large parts of the information are available online and the missing details concerning technicalities were discussed rather openly in the interviews. However, this is not exemplary for minorities and their finances, making it extremely difficult to get information about numbers and structures in some cases. This will likely be and remain the main obstacle to research in this field, necessitating creative approaches to methodology.

While this small study is only a first step in collecting data and offering a first analysis of how public funding schemes can be shaped as well how this might influence the work of minority organizations, future research might show whether the considerations of

this paper are applicable and what other elements of funding schemes influence the empowerment potential of minority organizations for their communities.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The federal states of Germany enjoy a large degree of autonomy in a number of areas of law-making as well as in financial matters. Each state therefore has its own constitution and budget, and a large share of the legal protection and financial support concerning national minorities are affairs of the state rather than the federal government.

<sup>2</sup> The study includes not only the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein but also the German minority in Denmark, as well as the Frisian ethnic group and the Sinti and Roma in Schleswig-Holstein.

<sup>3</sup> Danish minority schools are not part of the public education system, but are private schools. Under Schleswig-Holstein state school law private schools are normally subsidised with a pupil expense ratio of 80% of that of public schools.

<sup>4</sup> The respective financial auditing is carried out by Danish authorities.

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## **Between neo-Ottomanist kin policy in the Balkans and Transnational Kin Economics in the EU**

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### **Abstract**

During the last century Turkey's kin politics in the Balkans have undergone a transition from ethnic nationalist politics to neo-Ottomanist cultural economics. After a short overview of the historical development of Turkish kin politics in the Balkans, this article investigates the contemporary institutional and discursive novelties and challenges on the agenda of Turkey's kin policy, and its institutional and discursive transition from ethnic nationalist kin policy in the Balkans towards transnational economic and religious strategy prioritizing `Turks abroad` in the EU. The study is based on local investigations and interviews in Macedonia, Albania and Bulgaria, as well as content analysis of official documents and articulations of decision making institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament, The Agency of Turks and Kin Abroad, Yunus Emre Institutes, TIKA, Diyanet, and migrant associations.

**Keywords:** kin politics, Turks abroad, Balkan Muslims, EuroTurks, Turkey

### **Introduction**

Kin politics was one of the most influential strategies in the regional territorial policies of the Balkan states during the interwar years. The nation-building processes, the Wilsonian principle of self-determination, and the delineation of the Westphalian territorial borders of the new nation-states called the attention of the Balkan states to the minority issues and kin in the region. The main kin policy at that time had been based on a various migration strategies varying from population exchanges and deportations to ethnic cleansing of certain sacred territories. The interwar years were followed by post-WW2 regime changes and Stalinist

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reforms in the Eastern Block, especially in Chubrilovic's year in Former Yugoslavia and the Stalinist Soviet Union. That is why almost the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw extensive ethnic and minority forced movements across the region.

The rise of minority rights discourse at the end of the Cold War brought kin minority policies as a bargaining strategy onto the agenda of IR politics again. During the 1990s kin politics rose as conveyers of cross border ethnic nationalist policies and found a place among the primary national security goals of the Balkan states and Turkey. Nevertheless, the return of genocide and ethnic cleansing as strategies of irredentist policies in the Balkans securitized cross border kin politics as a major regional threat to the territorial integrity of the newly establishing Balkan states. (Poulton, 1997:194-213)

The contemporary notion of kin politics has been transformed to a more complex, multifaceted and transnational phenomenon at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The intensification and diversity in transnational capital and international migration (around 232,000,000 migrants) (IOM, 2015:2) converged with foreign policy searches for extraterritorial extension of economic, political and cultural sovereignty. Subjects such as kin and migrants remittances, investments and capital, kin enterprises, extraterritorial elections, multiple citizenship, lobbying, transnational extension and enlargement of the "national" borders and transnational expansion of national identity, borders and politics etc. entered the foreign policy agendas. Indeed, the new sovereignty perception does not end at the national territorial borders but extends to new cognitive borders of a virtual economic or cultural sphere of influence delineated by the dispersion of the kin minorities around the world. In particular, the spread of multiple citizenship as a practical solution for increasing emigration and nationality issues gave opportunity for initiation of new phenomena such as cross border or transnational elections. While in the previous century the scholarship used to study and talk about the Jewish, Armenian and Greek diaspora in the world politics, now there are numerous growing diasporas around the world such as the German, Russian, Chinas, African, Turkish etc.

### **1. Defining the kin in the Balkans: from ethnic to neo-Ottomanist definition of kin**

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the definition of kin abroad used to shift between ethno-linguistic and ethno-religious components of Turkish identity "spread from the Adriatic sea up to Great China's wall."<sup>1</sup> This shift was defined usually by domestic hegemonic ideology of political



elite and its national security conceptions. Indeed, Turkey's strategic goals and priorities in the Balkans and Central Asia found reflection in the official articulations about the so called Turkish World expanding across European and Asian continents. For these reasons old Ottoman entities such as Gagauz, Pomaks, Albanians and Bosniaks had to face different approaches, sometimes inclusive, sometimes exclusive. On the other hand Turkish-speaking Christian Orthodox emigrants and refugees living abroad, such as Anatolian Greek refugees in Greece, Anatolian Armenians or Jews, have never found place within the definition of kin or Turks abroad policy in Turkey.

Based on its Ottoman legacies, Turkey had essential difficulty in defining who is included and who is excluded from the kin abroad, and thus has never developed a constant definition and criteria for "who is the kin abroad?" The early Republican leaders used to define the Turkish identity in connection to Ottoman Islamic heritage. In this early post-Ottoman conception of the "Turks left in the lost Ottoman lands" the Bosniaks, Albanians and the other Muslim communities in the Balkans were categorized as heirs of the Ottoman culture, thus, being Ottoman Muslim was considered a priory condition for the membership in the young Turkish Republic. In spite of this, the autochthonous non-Muslim groups such as Greeks, Armenians and Jews were approached as outsiders in the newly constructed Turkish nation.

Before the rise of the Germanophile movement in Turkey, the religion and Ottoman culture constituted the basic features of the Turkish identity. The famous phrase of "Elhamdulillah Türküm" (Thank God I am Turkish) points to these early years. During the 1930s, German nationalism had a great influence among the Turkish political elite and was followed by public calls for appropriation of the new Turkish language as the essential basis of the Turkish identity. The Bosnian, Albanian, Sanjak and Turkish immigrants and refugees who left their lands as result of land nationalization and ethnic cleansing policies in the Serbo-Croatian-Sloven Kingdom or as a result of the Lausanne Treaty became first targets of these nationalist aspirations. (Nurcan Özgür Baklacioglu, 2011)

According to the Ottoman Commission for Migration, after the post-WW1 Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian colonization and nationalization of the occupied Ottoman lands, i.e. between years 1919-1926 (Stokes, 1998: 25-30), Turkey received 198,688 (Şimşir, 1986) refugees from Bulgaria and 131,000 refugees from Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After the implementation of the Law for Agricultural Reform and Colonization in 1931, the number of the refugees who left the Kingdom of Yugoslavia rose to 350,000 Albanian Muslims

according to Albanian historiography (Instituti i Historisë i Kosovës ed. 1997:40; Shehu, 1994:5) and 116,487 Bosnians, Albanians, Turks and Sanjak Muslims who settled in Turkey by 1940 (See Geray, Appendix Tables)

The Yugoslav refugees were followed by the Pomak and Turkish refugees, as result of the Bulgarianisation campaign against the Pomak population in Southwestern Bulgaria between 1931-35 and the policies of fascist Koseivanov government. The territorial exchanges at the Romanian-Bulgarian border in the Dobrudza region (Eastern Dunau region) caused the forced emigration of hundreds of Tatars and Turks. According to Ahmet Cevat Eren, from the proclamation of the Republic until 1970 Turkey received approximately 1,519,368 Ottoman Muslims and Turks from the Balkans (Table 1) (Eren, 1966:91).

**Table 1: Balkan Migrations to Turkey**

Years	Yugoslavia	Romania	Greece	Bulgaria
<b>1912-1913</b>	<b>440.000</b>			
<b>1923-1939</b>	115.427	117.095	384.000	198.688
<b>1940-1945</b>	1.671	4.201	-	15.744
<b>1946-1960</b>	152.003	55	23.808	154.112
<b>1961-1970</b>	30.502	274	2.081	15.000
<b>1971-1980</b>	1.797	136	-	116.104
<b>1981-1990</b>	2.623	760	-	178.664
<b>1993-1997</b>				77.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>304.023</b>	<b>122.521</b>	<b>409.889</b>	<b>749.648</b>
<b>General Total</b>	<b>2.026.081</b>			

Source: Şimşir, 1990; Kirisci, 1995:175-80

Indeed, following the Balkan War refugees and Lausanne exchanges, the Balkan migrations of the 1920s shifted the Bosnian or Albanian speaking population from 29,224 in 1927 up to 91,425 in 1935. These are not comprehensive data because of some deficits in the implementation of population censuses at that time (Table 2).

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\* This number does not include the 133,272 returnees who returned to Bulgaria after the fall of the Jivkov regime.

**Table 2: The Balkan Population in Turkey according to the Language based Censuses**

Languages	1927		1935		1945		1950 <sup>2</sup>
	1 <sup>st</sup> Lang.	2nd Lang.	1 <sup>st</sup> Lang.	2nd Lang.	1st	2nd Lang.	1 <sup>st</sup> Lang
<b>Yugoslavia</b>							
Albanian	21,774	-	22,754	26,161	14,165	17,701	16,079
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,774</b>		<b>48,915</b>		<b>31,866</b>		<b>16,079</b>
<b>Bosnian</b>	7,450*	-	24,613	13,526	13,280	9,599	24,013
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,500</b>		<b>38,141</b>		<b>22,879</b>		<b>24,013</b>
<b>Serbian</b>	-	-	4,369		4,100		1,605
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>4,369</b>		<b>4,100</b>		<b>1,605</b>
<b>General Total</b>	<b>29,224</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>51,736</b>	<b>39,687</b>	<b>31,545</b>	<b>27,300</b>	<b>41,697</b>
<b>Yugoslavia Total</b>	<b>29,224</b>		<b>91,425</b>		<b>58,845</b>		<b>41,697</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>							
<b>Bulgarian</b>	8,245	-	8,245	-	8,750		6,491
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,245</b>		<b>8,245</b>		<b>8,750</b>		<b>6,491</b>
<b>Pomak</b>	12,309		32,661	8,380	13,033	5,594	36,612
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,309**</b>		<b>41,041</b>		<b>18,627</b>		<b>36,612</b>
<b>Tatar</b>	11,465	-	15,615	4,106	10,047	2,255	
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,465</b>		<b>19,721</b>		<b>12,302</b>		
<b>Total Languages</b>	<b>32,019</b>		<b>56,521</b>	<b>12,486</b>	<b>31,830</b>	<b>7,849</b>	<b>43,103</b>

\* At the census of 1927 Bosnian is counted under the category of “Other languages”, however, according to Fuat Dündar there were registered at least 7,450 Bosnian speakers in Kocaeli, İzmir and Bursa

\*\* The Pomak language is not referred to at the census of 1927, however it is possible to identify the number of the Pomak immigrants through the data of the Bulgarian speaking Muslim population. Indeed, of the 1,207 Bulgarian speakers in Kocaeli, as one of the Pomak populated cities in Turkey, only 25 expressed Christian religion. When the Pomak language appeared in the census of 1935, the number of Bulgarian speaking population fell to 8,245. See (Dündar, 1999: 156-159).

<b>Bulgaria Total</b>	<b>32,019</b>		<b>69,007</b>		<b>39,679</b>		<b>43,103</b>
<b>General Total</b>	<b>48,934</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>108,257</b>	<b>52,173</b>	<b>63,375</b>	<b>35,149</b>	<b>84,800</b>

Source: (Dündar,1999:156-159)

This linguistic diversity had a profound ethnification effect on the Kemalist and Germanophile political elite's definition of the Turkish identity. Ankara promoted cross border linguistic modernization and Turkification initiatives amongst the Turkish and Muslim intellectuals in Bulgaria and Macedonia, i.e. the modern Turkish alphabet entered the Turkish language and education in the Balkans during the 1930s and became important criteria in defining kin abroad until the 1950s.

The Cold War migration era (Castles et al., 2008) followed harsh ideological competition across the two sides of the Berlin Wall. The Bulgarian-Turkish border had undergone political asylum movements between the Eastern and Western Blocs. Indeed, 31% of the Balkan immigrants who came to Turkey until 1960 came from Bulgaria, and 22.4% from Yugoslavia (Geray, 1962: 6-12). The socialist modernization reforms and the collectivization of the land and production tools put double cultural and economic pressure on the Muslim populations in these countries. Religious oppositions against the Stalinist reforms resulted in forced emigration of 250,000 Bulgarian Muslims and Turks (Stoyanov, 1992:10-11) and according to the register of the Turkish Ministry of Rural Affairs 151,889 Yugoslav immigrants (Geray, 1962), according to Albanian and Serbian data 246,108 Muslims from Yugoslavia (Shehu, 1994:30; Mušović, 1990:456-472).

Until the end of the 1980s, any Muslim immigrant coming from the atheist Communist bloc was approached as a good Muslim kin. Since then, the Turkish speaking Christian Gagauz immigrants from Bulgaria and Romania have not been approached and accepted as kin. Similarly, the Westernization and modernization project never allowed Arab Muslims into this category. On the contrary, Bosnian, Pomak and Albanian Muslim immigrants who moved to Turkey as a result of Stalinist and Tito's policies of nationalization and communist modernization were provided primary protection as victims of the atheist oppressive regimes in the Communist Bloc. It is important to remember that these immigrants constituted significant political vote support for the conservative Democratic Party regime too (Nurcan Özgür Baklacioglu, 2011:458-60).

Besides the last language-based census in 1965, there is no official data about the Balkan population in Turkey today. There is knowledge about immigrant cities and districts in different parts of Turkey, such as Bursa, Adapazarı, Balıkesir, İzmir, Kocaeli, Tokat, Aydın, Denizli, Bilecik, Bolu, Eskişehir, Samsun etc. (Nurcan Özgür Baklacioğlu, 2010:408-20). It is rumoured that there are 10-20 million Balkan immigrants in Turkey organized in hundreds of migrant associations. No matter what is the number, 20<sup>th</sup> century Muslim immigration and refugee movements to Turkey had significant impact on the formation of the kin perceptions and policies in post-cold war Turkey.

After the so called “Great Excursion” of Bulgarian Turkish refugees in 1989, Turkey received temporary refugee inflows of 35,000 Bosnian (1993-95), 15,000 Kosovo (1997-98) and 6,151 Macedonian Turkish (2001) war refugees. Most of these refugees returned back to their lands after the end of the wars and were followed by temporary economic migrations to Turkey based on family links, marriage, employment or education opportunities. The most significant impact of these last migrations is that they triggered the revival of the Albanian and Bosnian identity amongst the former Bosnian and Albanian immigrant settlers in Turkey. The organization of Albanian, Bosnian and Sanjak immigrant community in Turkey initiated cross border links between these communities, Turkey, and the countries of origin in the Balkans.

In the new era of global circular migrations, there is a constant increase in the circular visits and suitcase trade between the Balkan countries and Turkey. In contrast to the previous migrations, the main reasons for emigration to Turkey or Western Europe are of socio-economic nature (Maeva, 2004). The underdeveloped infrastructure, low investments and agricultural setback compounded by wide unemployment in the Balkan villages result in ascending emigration to the cities, Turkey or Western Europe. (Laczko et al, 2002:187) Contemporary data indicates a formation of a new Bulgarian Turkish kin community in Europe that exceeds 30,000 Bulgarian Turks in Sweden, 10-30,000 in the Netherlands and 1000 in Austria<sup>3</sup>. The real number of Bulgarian Turkish seasonal migrants in Western Europe surpass the available data, because there is constant circulation of labour between the minority regions and Western European countries. The already established employment networks between the Western Europe and the minority villages in Bulgaria augmented the minority emigration and resulted in emptied or old-age populated villages, shut down schools, leaving Turkish teachers unemployed and low educational levels amongst the minority children.

There are claims about selective and corrupted implementation of the EU minority development projects applied primarily in the Pomak and Roma minority regions.<sup>4</sup>

While the labor emigration to Turkey leads to irregularization of the stay and illegal employment and results in permanent settlement in Turkey, the labor emigration to Western Europe is under temporary legal residence and employment that is managed and organized through employment agents or co-villagers networks. The field work shows that the labor emigration to Western Europe rarely results in permanent emigration; instead, the accumulation of the migrant remittances promotes internal migration in Bulgaria, i.e. emigration from the village to the city where there are sufficient education opportunities for the children.

These new migratory movements are reflected in the conceptual perception of both the kin and kin-state. The perception of Turkey and Turkishness amongst the Muslim societies in the Balkans is not mobilized as it used to be before late 1990s. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is possible to talk about two main categories of kin in the Balkans: the Turkish minorities in Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia and Kosovo, and societies with Ottoman descent, i.e. Bosniaks and Albanians in Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Sanjak and Tatars, Pomaks and Gagauzs in Romania and Bulgaria. The beginning of this century brought a new category of kin abroad onto the agenda: the Turkish citizens living abroad. While before, the definition of the kin was articulated around the Turks in the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia, today the so called “Turkish hinterland” is enlarged to the “Turks abroad” in Europe, Africa, Asia and America.

Differentiated from the Turks abroad, the category of kin broadened into a religion-based inclusive and expansionist category. It grasped any affiliation grounded on Islamic identity, and then on place of birth, ethnic identity, family roots, acquisition of Turkish language, education in Turkish schools, historical consciousness or immense capital investment. In this way contemporary kin abroad policy has more instrumental, functional, cultural, political, and market-based character.

There are various political, social and economic reasons for this conceptual shift in the official discourse. According to official statements the diaspora of the Turkish citizens who live abroad exceeds five million people. Most of them live in Western countries such as Germany (1,658,083 Turks), France (459,611), Netherlands (372,728), U.S. (250,000), Switzerland (71,691), and thus provide strategic lobbying power in Turkey’s EU policy. The Turkish diaspora in the EU was articulated as mobilized and manipulative electoral and

economic power based on the migrant remittances economics in the world. While historical, religious and cultural affiliation became prime features of the kin policy in the Balkans, the economic and political interests have a determinant role in the conceptualization of the “Turks abroad” policy. Similarly, while the traditional kin conception and policy was primarily based on the ethnic or religious identity, the new categorization placed legal differentiation between the Turkish citizens and Muslim societies with Turkish origin or Ottoman affiliation. Thus, in the case of kin policy in the Balkans it is possible to talk about two categories: Turkish minorities in the Balkans and Ottoman Muslim kin societies in the Balkans. This categorization is reflected in the contemporary kin policy in the region.

## **2. Historical Memory of Turkey’s Kin Politics**

The kin state perception and definition of the kin, as well as its approach, expectations and policies in relation to the kin plays defining role in the cases of ethnic politics and conflicts. The policies of the kin state can either facilitate the peaceful solution of a certain ethnic conflict or obstruct any peaceful solutions and escalate the conflict into a domestic or regional war. Traditionally the kin policy of Turkey was a secondary issue primarily dependent on the national, regional, and international geopolitical interests and security priorities of Turkey. The perpetual security dilemma under the conditions of WWI, WWII and the Cold War established migration as a strategy for the peaceful solution of ethnic conflicts or interstate disputes between Turkey and its neighbourhood.

The early republican political elite was the first to utilize this Ottoman legacy of migration as a policy of nation-building and Turkification. An important aspect of this early republican kin minority policy in the Balkans was also based on bilateral agreements prioritizing the principle of reciprocity. The Treaty of Lausanne and the 1925 Good Neighbourhood and Friendship Agreement with Bulgaria are two important examples for Ankara’s attempts to keep and preserve the kin in the Balkans through comprehensive provision of the legal minority and/or human rights. Moreover, as the unsigned (Sejdiu, 1996:268) 1938 Agreement for Migration of the Turkish Muslims from the South Serbian lands shows, there was an important effort by the Kemalist elite to arrange extensive financial compensation for the lost properties and rights of the forced migrants who were forced to leave South Serbia after 1933.<sup>5</sup> There is no knowledge about such effort during the first mass refugee flows from the lost Ottoman lands. This agreement was set back on the agenda of the Turkish-Yugoslav relations in 1948, when the Belgrade government was anxious about the

total solution of the Albanian issue under the Chubrilovic's plan for the deportation of the Albanians to Turkey. In relation to this migration agreement it is important to realize that the rejection of the agreement did not cause and could not prevent the mass-migrations of the 1930s and 1950s, but the rejection of these agreements impeded the actualization of the extensive compensations that it foresaw for the lost properties (lands, farms, immovables, animals, agricultural instruments, uncollected crops etc.), values, and rights (to return back, to keep its property and citizenship) in the abandoned lands. Yet the details of the agreements show that the political elite in Ankara was very well informed about the collectivization and nationalization of the private properties and their utilization for solving the nationalities issue in certain parts of the federation (Nurcan Özgür Baklacioglu, 2011:157-162).

The security trap of the Cold War interrupted the human rights and minority rights grounded policy perspective of the republican elite. The ideological confrontation and the exacerbated communist threat brought forward the anti-communist and pro-American discourse of the Democratic Party of Menderes, who also followed the Ottoman legacy of Muslim immigration from the former Ottoman lands. The discourse of human and minority rights was abandoned and later on replaced by the religious discourse on solidarity with the Muslims left under the tyranny of the oppressive atheist communist regime. Relying on the conservative vote of the rural population, the Democratic Party promoted the immigration of thousands of Albanian, Bosnian and Turkish Muslims from Tito's Yugoslavia.

After 1970's, the nationalist geo-political "Turkic World" discourse of the Turk-Islam Synthesis gained wide support among the growing nationalist anti-Soviet circles in Turkey. According to this approach the Turks and Muslims in the communist world are oppressed by the Soviet regime and have to be liberalized and organized within a new geo-cultural space, the so-called Turkish World, extending from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China. This discourse retained its predominance until the mid-1990s and focused on the newly liberated former Soviet republics. The lack of sufficient financial, institutional and political support limited the effectiveness and influence of the Turkish World approach within the circles of the Nationalist People's Party in Turkey. However, Turkishness stood out as a distinguishing pattern of Turkey's kin policy in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans.

The end of ideological confrontation, the opening of the borders, and the democratization wave in the Balkan states required a new approach that partly resembled a return towards the principles of the Kemalist republic. The kin in the Balkans was articulated as a cultural bridge for peace and friendship policy in the Balkans. Ankara undertook the



responsibility to protect the Muslim kin in Bosnia and Kosovo, and thus initiated intensive international diplomacy against the genocide in Bosnia and Serbian atrocities in Kosovo, provided refugee for the war refugees from the region, and participated or cooperated in the NATO peace operations in the region. Undoubtedly, these diplomatic, political and military activities and operations in the region promoted Turkey's role as a peacekeeper and regional power in the Balkans until the recognition of the Kosovo independency. This was also a strategy to balance the expanding Greek economic and EU-based influence in the region at the end of 1990s. Since Turkey was more a commercial rather than economic actor in the Balkans, the military elite gained a strong say in the decision-making for Turkey's Balkan policy at that time. Indeed, Turkey became important military power that not only participated in the UN and NATO operations but took part in the educational and infrastructural building of the national armed forces in numerous regional states.

During this turbulent period of post-Cold War Balkan history, the kin policy was approached as an extension of Turkey's desire to keep its position as a regional power and balance the Greek-Russian-Serbian axis (Abazi 2008: 76). The main goal was to preserve the Turkish minorities in the region through complication of kin immigration towards Turkey, i.e. visa restrictions, entrance prohibition and administrative deterrence. Guided by numerous Balkan Turkology Research Centers established by Turkology and national history faculties, the main goal was to protect Turkish culture and history in the area.

Turkishness constituted an important reference point in the definition of the scope of the kin policy at that time. The kin policy consisted of an amalgam between a policy of national responsibility and a policy of cultural integration based primarily on cultural and financial support for strengthening the Turkish identity in the region. The main strategies of the kin policy at that time were to support the Turkish parties in the region, and to provide educational materials for promoting Turkish language education in the region. The discourse of Turkish minorities as a bridge for cooperation and peaceful neighbourhood with the states in the region kept its priority in Turkey's official approach to the region. The accommodation of dual citizenship for the former immigrants from the Balkans was an important innovation that had a very valuable impact on the life of both Turkish migrants and minorities living across the Turkish-Balkan borders. Former immigrants from Bulgaria, Kosovo and Macedonia who succeeded in restoring their former citizenship of the abandoned country activated the economic, cultural and cross border voting activities between Turkey and

Bulgaria, Bosnia and Kosovo. The cross border elections were a long-standing significant innovation that opened a way for political return of former migrants to the abandoned lands.

Finally, another significant novelty in the Turkish kin policy during the 1990s was the provision of Ministry of Education scholarships and contingency for graduate and post-graduate education of students coming from the so called “Turkish hinterland”, i.e. Balkans, Caucasus, and Central Asia. This soft power strategy brought its strategic impact during the 2000s, when many of those early graduates were appointed to strategic decision-making posts in their countries. Later on the AKP government extended the geographical scope of the Turkish hinterland towards its spheres of influence in the Middle East and Africa.

Finally, the 1990s are characterized by the constant critique about the lack of a separate institution for the coordination of the Turks abroad as a whole and kin policy in Turkey. The absence of such a coordination agency was a significant weakness of the kin policy decision-making at that time. Main agents of the kin policy at that time were the embassies, Ministry of Education, TİKA and kin representatives and political parties in the Balkans. The core decision makers were the advisers and undersecretaries on Turkish kin and communities abroad placed under the Prime Ministry. Turkish armed forces and General Staff in Ankara had a heavy say with regard to the kin policies in the region as well. Numerous personal conversations with Turkish intellectuals in the region pointed out the guiding role of the General Staff in solving the problems or fulfilling the requests of the Turkish minorities in the region. Thus many Turkish intellectuals in the region used to avoid the embassies and the prime ministry, but paid often visits to the General Staff in Ankara.

Above all, it should be underlined that the contemporary kin policy constitutes coexistence between the geopolitical and strategic continuity of the kin policies of the 1990s and the administrative, institutional and discursive novelties of the last decade. While the geo-strategic basis keeps its strong say in the mentality of the kin policy, the actors, institutions, instruments and overall ideological discourse of the Turkey’s kin policy have undergone extensive change during the last decade.

There is an expansive shift from the narrow kin definition of the 1990s, i.e. the priority of the kin policy shifted from Turkish minorities in the Balkans towards Muslim kin in the Balkans. Some use to define this phenomenon within the Neo-Ottomanist discourse because there is a strong reference to the Ottoman cultural legacy and Ottoman roots and culture of the Muslims in the Balkans. There is also a discursive shift from “Balkan Turks” to “Ottoman Muslims in the Balkans” followed by a functional rearticulation from “Bridge” into “Evlad-ı

Fatihah” (The Sons of the Conquerors). This discourse was prominent during the hegemony of the Turkish-Islam synthesis in the Turkish political life. Approached from this historical point of view, I would rather suggest that this process refers to a rebirth of the Turk-Islam synthesis of the 80’s that had significant influence in the cultivation of the Ozal’s (ANAP) and AKP’s political elite. Since the rule of the Democratic Party in the 1950s Islam has always been basic reference point in the kin policy tradition towards the Muslim population living in the lost Ottoman lands in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

### **3. The Rise of Turks Abroad Policy in the EU: institutional and discursive novelties, geopolitical continuities**

An important novelty that entered Ankara’s EU policy agenda during the late 1990s was the rise of the Turks Abroad policy exclusively based on the notions of citizenship and human rights. After 2006 returning migration increased and led to the formation of a foreign return population of nearly half a million around the so-called Turkish Riviera (Balkir & Sudas, 2014). Accordingly, the policy priority shifted from “Kin Abroad” to “Turkish Citizens Living Abroad”. The institutionalization and principles of Turks abroad policy have been promoted firstly by the high presence of EuroTurks in the EU and later enforced and implemented by EuroTurk returnees that found positions among Turkey’s EU or migration policy decision makers in Ankara.

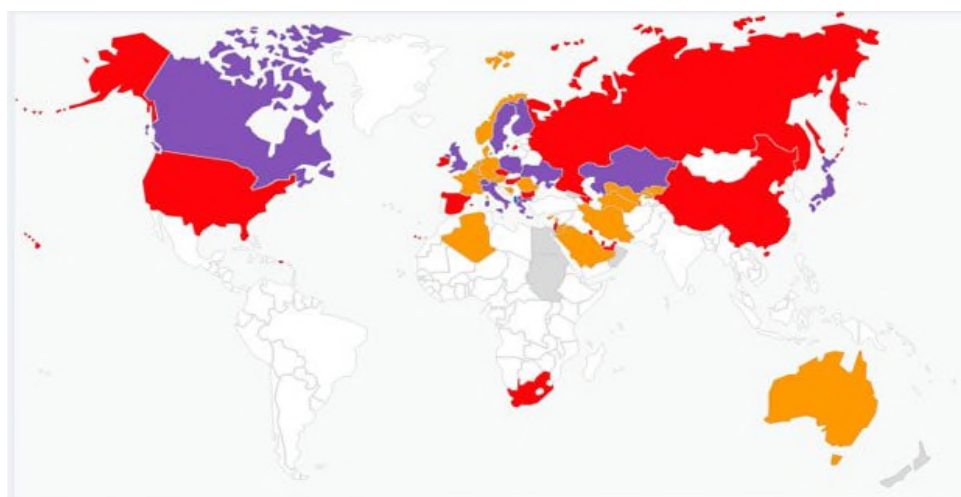
The Turkish citizens living abroad constitute the prior socio-economic, political and cultural challenge facing Turkey’s contemporary kin policy that shows an enforced continuity of a post-nationalist conservative economic liberal discourse and extensive political instrumentalization of the Turks in the EU. In the contemporary foreign policy discourse in Ankara approximately 5 million EuroTurks are approached primarily as an important source of remittances. In 2001 Turkey was rated as 3<sup>rd</sup> among the highest remittances income sending countries (Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003: 81-84). The role of emigrants in Turkey’s growing tourism and foreign trade sectors is immense as well.

During the 2015 elections Turkey received 2,867,658 political votes organized around 112 electoral boxes in 54 countries.<sup>6</sup> The political, cultural and economic outcomes of post-12 September 1980 military coup asylum to the EU as well as the 1990s German Retired Immigration to South Turkey become more and more observable. During the June 2015 general elections the Kurdish and Turkish refugees in the EU voted for HDP (Peoples and

Democracy Party). Known as a mainly Kurdish party, HDP gained 21.04 % of the general vote abroad, a rate higher than the one gained at the national level. HDP was especially strong among the Kurdish refugees mobilised in Sweden, Danimark, Norway, and left-oriented Turkish citizens in France.

The ruling party AKP and the President Erdogan were the other political actors that benefited the most from the Turks abroad vote. During the presidential elections in 2014 T. R. Erdogan had reached 66-80% of support among the neo-conservative Turkish citizens living in Germany (68%), France, Austria (80%), Belgium and the Netherlands (77%). Mobilized around the mosques and Muslim religious centers in the EU, the AKP vote reached 49.36% of the total vote abroad during 2015 general elections.<sup>7</sup>

Map 1: Political Party Distribution of the Turkish Vote Abroad



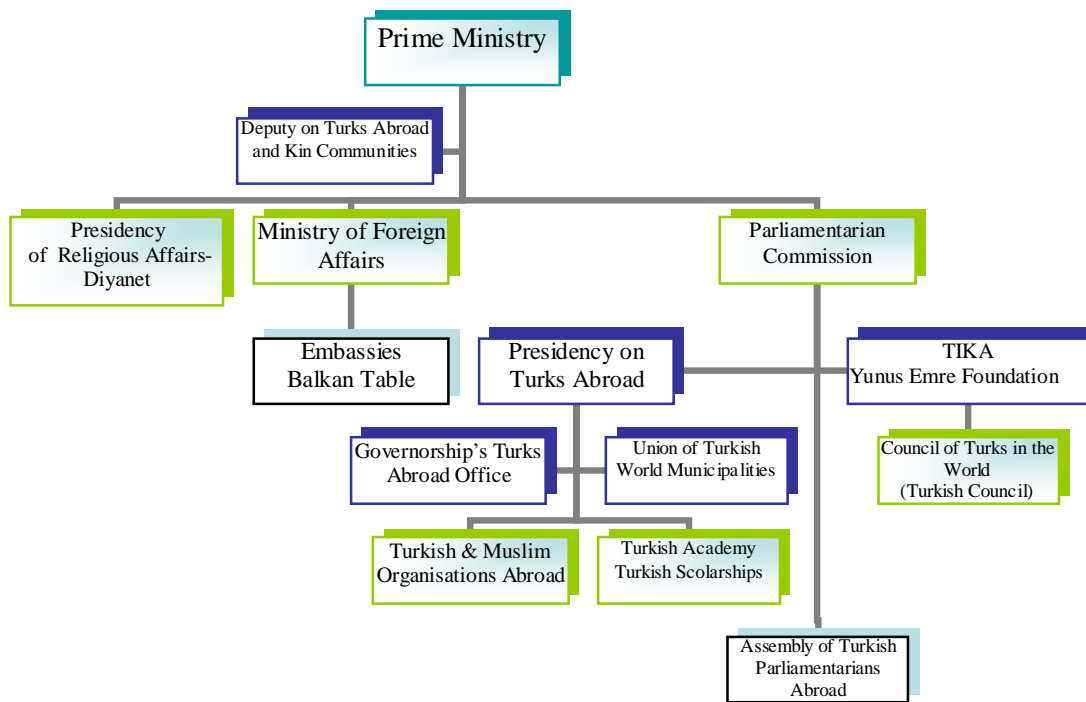
**Reference: Yellow: AKP vote      Violet: HDP vote      Red: CHP Vote**

By 2013 Turkey is not anymore among the first 10 high remittances income countries and the rate of the remittances to GDP is as small as 0.1% of the national GDP. Moreover, after its transition to a receiving country Turkey takes part among remittances sending countries especially for regions such as MENA and Asia.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the EU-Turkey transnational migration economy has evolved into economics of the circular migration of goods, services and financial capital through millions of returnees, EU retired citizens, and tourists who maintain comprehensive living transnational capital accumulation. For instance, there are more than 4 million young or retired German returnees and permanent seasonal EU

tourists that constitute a significant community of consumers and agents of commercial and financial links between Turkey and the EU (Push and Splitt, 2013). There are 140,000 Turkish companies in the EU zone with a total annual turnover that exceeds 50 billion Euros. The annual expenditure of the Turkish citizens living in Western Europe constitutes a market of 22 billion Euros.<sup>9</sup> In 2015 foreign trade between the EU and Turkey is expected to reach 300 billion USD.<sup>10</sup> Three quarters of the 31 billion Turkish FDI in 2013 consisted of financial and petroleum investments in the EU and US.<sup>11</sup> So, compared to the kin in the Balkans, the Turks abroad constitute a population of strategic concern for Turkey.

Until the beginning of the century the 1,700,000 kin population in the Balkans headed the suitcase trade income and connected Turkish market to the former Eastern Block markets. This cross border performance slowed down at the end of 1990s. Today Ankara's Ottoman kin definition encompasses roughly 8,200,000 Muslim kin in the Balkans and includes all Muslims in the all Balkan countries such as Albania, Bosnia, Macedonia, Greece, Kosovo, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Serbia and Romania.<sup>12</sup> The quantity looks big, but the impact of neo-Ottomanist discourse remains relatively weak, especially among the nearly 4.5 million Sunni and Bektashi Muslims in Albania and Bosnia. It is difficult to say whether there is a successful link between the Muslim kin presence and Turkey's economic performance in the region. Ankara's insistence on the Ottoman heritage card does not increase Turkey's usual position as 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> among the first 5 investment or trade countries in the Balkan market. Moreover, according to Bulgarian sources, in 2014 Bulgaria received 830 million USD remittances from the Bulgarian Citizens in Turkey.( Velickov,2015)

So, at the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century Turks Abroad are a prior source of formal/informal remittances that exceed the income from the investments and trade at the small markets of Macedonia, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Kosovo. As World Bank and IMF studies show, remittances transferred from the North to the South surpass the total amount of investments and trade income in the South.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 1: Main Actors in the Kin Policy Decision Making Process**

Approached as a comprehensive transnational financial sector, the economic and political management of the EuroTurkish world required further institutionalization in Ankara. While in the 1990s the establishment of an agency for the Turks abroad found wide expression among the Turks in the Balkans, today the newly established Presidency of Turks Abroad constitutes an important coordination center for the Turks in the world. Although designed during 1990s the Presidency of Turks Abroad found realization during the AKP government that had extensive connections with political and religious mobilization among the conservative Turkish immigrants living in the EU. Established under the Prime Ministry and the guidance of the Parliamentarian Commission on Turks Abroad and Kin Societies, the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Kin Communities has a task to coordinate all institutions and organizations that operate in the field of kin policy.<sup>14</sup>

The most significant novelty that followed the EuroTurkish presence in the decision making process has been related to the introduction of the notion of human rights. Avoided in any domestic public space and external kin policy, the reference to the human rights and HR law is extremely emphasized in regard to the Turkish citizens abroad who “...did not take part in any terrorist action...”<sup>15</sup>. The Turks Abroad policy embrace only the loyal EuroTurks who are somewhat subjected to a reciprocal policy against the EU’s constant critique in regard to the HR violations in Turkey. This “new” strategy foresees access to the citizenship of the

receiving country, protection from xenophobic and racist violence, exclusive instrumentalization of the EU human rights law, human rights advocacy and further human rights education and awareness among the Turks in the EU, as well as equality in the access to human rights between the Turkish citizens and the other immigrants in the EU.

Although the 1<sup>st</sup> Article of the Law establishing the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Kin Societies foresees cultural, social and economic relations and policies towards the kin communities abroad<sup>16</sup>, the human rights perspective has never been present in Turkey's kin policy in the Balkans. That is why Ankara always has had problems with some human rights-oriented minority political elites in Bulgaria, Kosovo or Macedonia. Such a conflicting relationship led to the change in the leadership of one of the strongest Turkish parties in the Balkans, the retreat of MRF leader Ahmed Dogan and the establishment of numerous opponent parties in Macedonia and Kosovo.<sup>17</sup> While the human rights based kin policy is of vital importance for the strengthening of the minority status and fighting ethnic and religious discrimination in the Balkans, it is avoided as a compromise for good relations with the Balkan neighbourhood.

During the last years the AKP government initiated the formation of opponent minority parties that favour Turkey's priorities in the region, but this Erdogan-promoted strategy did not find substantive support among the minorities. Formation of opponent minority parties triggered slight democratic competition and accountability and less monopolization in the political choice, and they could probably lead to more democratic voting at the local elections. However, in cases of quantitatively small minorities such as the Turkish minorities in Macedonia and Kosovo these initiations led to dispersal of the minority vote and mobilized vote losses at the national level. Ankara's traditional strategy was to keep the Turkish minority vote mobilized around a certain leader or political party. During the AKP era, similarly to the model of the EuroTurks, the kin minorities in the Balkans have seen a growing number of local civil society actors in Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia and Kosovo that have the support of the Diyanet or Presidency for Turks Abroad and Kin Communities.

The kin's functional representation as a bridge is reformed into conveyer of Turkey's neo-Ottoman or religious-cultural policy in the Balkans. When it comes to the EuroTurks, this approach presents a strong cultural insight for the protection of the national cultural identity of the Turkish citizens abroad.<sup>18</sup> As defined in Article 8/f of the Law on the Presidency for Turks Abroad, the final goal of the new Turkey's Turks Abroad policy is to promote a powerful image of Turkey in the international field as well as provide a strong and effective Turkish

lobby abroad. The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Kin Communities is expected to work as a coordination office to build on long-standing policy and strategy in this field.<sup>19</sup> Under the motto “*We are wherever there are our citizens, kin and relatives*”, the Presidency is expected to coordinate some newly established institutions in the field of kin policy. One of those newly established institutions is the Union of Turkish World Municipalities.

Founded in 2006, the Union of Turkish World Municipalities aims at expanding the network of cross border twin municipalities between Turkey and the close neighbourhood.<sup>20</sup> One of the most developed twin networks is realized with Balkan countries such as Bulgaria, Macedonia, Kosovo and Greece. There are more than 40 twin municipalities between the Turkish-populated municipalities in Bulgaria and Balkan migrants-populated municipalities in Turkey. The majority of the activities between the twin cities works towards the promotion of cross border economic exchange, business meetings and mutual investments.

In 2008, Ankara established another important kin policy institution: the Yunus Emre Foundation. This Foundation aims at promoting the Turkish language and culture around the world. Inspired by the works of well known British, German, French and American cultural centers around the world, it has founded 26 Yunus Emre Cultural Centers and plans to establish 100 Turkish libraries around the world. So far, the Yunus Emre Foundation is one of the most referred to actors in the field of kin policy. In 2009 the government established the so called Turkish Council i.e. the Council of the Turks Abroad in İstanbul (Türk Konseyi), the Turkish Parliamentarian Assembly in Baku (TÜRKPA), the Turkish Academy in Kazakhstan; and the Council for Cooperation of the Turkish Speaking Countries (Türk Dili Konuşan Ülkeler İş Birliği Konseyi). These institutions provide a platform for meeting and the exchange of knowledge and experience between representatives of different Turkish or kin societies around the world.

In June 2012, The Presidency organized the Ankara meeting of 600 Turkish NGO representatives coming from 17 different countries around the world. The Presidency also coordinates the Turkish scholarship program that enrolled 9,000 students in 2011 and followed 45,000 applications in 2012. The program provided scholarship to 3916 students in the academic year 2012-2013.<sup>21</sup> In 2014 the number of foreign students who study in Turkey through the Turkish Scholarship program has reached 50,000.<sup>22</sup> Initiated in 1992 this program was applied only to the Turkish minorities and communities in the Balkans, Cyprus, Caucasus and Central Asia. Under the motto “Turkey: a world education center”, the AKP government expanded the Turkish scholarship program and promoted university tourism from all around



the world. Today the number of international students expands with the Turkish citizens and kin abroad, and the Turkish Scholarship Program consumes almost half of the Presidency budget. In the first half of 2014 the Presidency spent 16,084,662 Euros on scholarships for 12,000 international students of the so-called “Grand Student Project”. Another 40 percent of the budget is used for financing NGO projects, research, and cultural activities of the EuroTurks and kin abroad. In total, 86 percent of the budget goes directly to international scholarships, NGO support and research projects and programs. In 2014 the Presidency budget has been increased by almost 20 percent to 64,834,666 Euros.<sup>23</sup>

All these institutions constitute the soft power of the Turkish foreign cultural and economic policy in the Balkans (Kalm, 2012). However, the actor on the rise during the last decade is Diyanet, the Religious Affairs Directorate. The Diyanet has gained importance in the field of kin policy based on the preference and expectations of the EuroTurks. It exceeded the role of the TIKA -Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency as one of the oldest Turkish institutions in the Balkans, which has 33 coordination offices in 30 countries, and 10,086 projects applied between 2002 and 2011 in approximately 100 countries. In the past TIKA has been active especially in the Balkans, however nowadays its activity zone has been expanded to Africa, Asia and Far East. In 2011 TIKA realized 425 projects in the Balkans. It also gained recognition as an agent of moderate Ottoman Islam in the Balkans versus Wahhabism and Selefism. Yet, TIKA was brought to the Turkish Parliament with claims about connections to ISIS and El-Nusra.<sup>24</sup> TIKA is in close collaboration with charities that aim at Turkish language and Ottoman culture education, such as AKEA, Charity for Culture and Education and also the local Kosovo Islam Union in Kosovo.<sup>25</sup> As a major renovator of the Ottoman mosques and Ottoman Heritage in the Balkans<sup>26</sup>, TIKA is one of the institutions that also saw a high increase in its budget. In 2013 the budget of TIKA increased by 15% and has reached 99,791,000 TL. This budget constitutes approximately ¼ of the budget of Diyanet in 2013. In general, as the debates of the 2013 budget show, it is possible to conclude that all these new and old soft power actors in Turkey’s Balkan politics are considered under the umbrella of the Diyanet, because the budget of strategic institutions such as the Presidency, Yunus Emre Foundation and TIKA were debated in one package with the Diyanet’s budget.

## Conclusion

In contrast to the 1990s, Turkey's kin policy undergone four important changes during the last decade:

- 1) The conceptual distinction between the kin and the Turks Abroad followed extensive marketization and institutionalization of the kin policy. As opposed to the narrow ethnic conception of the 1990s, the early 21<sup>st</sup> century kin policy definition gained predominantly religious and geopolitical content grasping the Turkish citizens living abroad and Islamic societies with Ottoman geo-cultural heritage.
- 2) While Turks Abroad rose as primarily a political and economic diaspora, the kin in the Balkans served as cultural ground for Turkey's neo-Ottomanist policy of fighting radical Islamic movements in the region.
- 3) The Diyanet rose as chief actor in both kin and Turks Abroad policies;
- 4) The EuroTurks policy provided a model and strategy for the kin policies in the Balkans

The priority of EuroTurkish preferences and experience in the kin policy decision making infrastructure led to discrepancies in defining the problems and needs of the EuroTurks and Muslims in the Balkans. Indeed, while Ankara senses an important lack of religious institutions, imams and education among EuroTurks, and the number of the mosques, imams and Islamic centers among the Muslim communities in the Balkans is relatively sufficient. Unlike the EuroTurks, the Muslim communities in the Balkans undergo problems such as ethnic and social discrimination, human rights violations as result of radical nationalist attacks, unemployment, poverty, education problems, emigration, empty villages etc. Based on the idea of fighting radical Islam, Ankara claims to promote soft Turkish Islam policies and strategies towards both EuroTurks and kin in the Balkans and Central Asia.

The main sign of this policy is the functional and financial activation of the Diyanet in the region.<sup>27</sup> The activity of the Directorate for Religious Affairs is a novelty typical for the era of the AKP government. In 2013 its budget increased by 18 % up to 4,604,649,000 TL and exceeded the total budgets of the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry for European Union Affairs. About 81% of this budget is devoted to personnel spending under the Diyanet's 2005 project on appointing religious personnel to the EuroTurks and the other Muslim communities abroad. After the appointment of 38 counsellors, 15 attaches and 20 coordinators, by the end of 2013 the Diyanet was represented by 60 Religious

Affairs Counsellors, 44 Religious Affairs Attaches and 20 Religious Affairs Coordinators in various Turkish embassies all around the world. All these counselors, coordinators and attaches have additional religious affairs personnel with specialized knowledge to coordinate and initiate the construction of mosques, religious schools, social and cultural centers.<sup>28</sup>

After the proclamation of the 2005 International Theological Program (İlahiyat Programı) the Diyanet sponsored the education of 655 students from abroad. It established seminaries and appointed functionaries in 180 twin-cities in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus. It established the Islamic Theological Department at the Frankfurt Goethe University and Islamic courses, seminars for enhancing the culture and knowledge of the Islamic clergy abroad, as well as building of new religious high schools abroad. The Diyanet also opened seminaries in Romania, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The Diyanet funds the education of seminary students coming from Kosovo, Bulgaria, Crimea, Albania, Cyprus, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to study in the seminaries in Turkey. In 2011-2012 Diyanet sponsored 318 graduate seminary students from 84 countries, and in 2012-2013 the number of these students increased to 360. The Mustafa Germirli Anadolu Seminary in Kayseri is one of the main education centers for the professional education and training of 188 clerks coming from the close neighbourhood and Africa. While the Istanbul Fatih Sultan Mehmet Anadolu Seminary accommodates 71 students from abroad, the Konya Selçuklu Mevlana Seminary provides education to 324 seminary students coming from 98 countries from around the world.<sup>29</sup>

Beside the European cities, under the programs of Diyanet, young seminary educators or imams are being appointed to various villages and cities in the Balkans as well. Based on Ankara's goal to fight radical Islamic influence<sup>30</sup> and teach better Islam in the Balkans<sup>31</sup>, this policy has two reasons: one is to fill the empty positions in religious institutions located abroad, the second is related to the moral and academic education of the kin religious clergy abroad.<sup>32</sup> However, unlike in the EU member states where the Islamic tradition and institutions are weak, there is no need for external clergy in most of the Balkan countries that have inherited the Ottoman architecture. Moreover, it is important to mention that the major necessity in the Balkans is not the appointment of a religious clergy from Turkey, but the restoration of the destroyed Ottoman heritage in the region. Unlike the EU member states, the local Balkan Muslim population has its own religious clergy that knows the local culture, habits, history and psychology, and thus has more effective communication skills and links with the local people. Interviews with imams and religious personnel in Macedonia and

Bulgaria show that the appointed Turkish clergy has to pay respect and attention to the local cultural and religious texture and Islam in the Balkans. Discursive marginalization of the Islamic knowledge and morality of the Balkan Muslims, i.e. and top-down enforced efforts to teach the local imams the “right” rules of a prayer may lead to future disagreement between the local and the imposed Turkish Islam.

The strengthened role of Diyanet as one of the main actors in Turkey’s kin and Turks Abroad policy in the Balkans and Europe is also a contemporary novelty that provides a basis for Turkey’s so called neo-Ottoman policy discourse. While Turkey’s goal is to undertake and restore the Ottoman image and heritage in the Balkans, the activities of the Diyanet may raise new questions and doubts among both Muslim and non-Muslim populations in the region.

Finally, unlike the case of EuroTurks, Turkey’s economic presence in the Balkans remains behind Croatia, Germany, Serbia and Italy. Infrastructure construction, banking, education and industry share the most part of the Turkish investments in the region. During the last decade there has been a steady increase in Turkish university tourism and education sector activities. The number of the Turkish universities, especially in Bosnia and Kosovo, is increasing. Yunus Emre Institutes and TIKA work as road builders ahead of the private investors and trade companies in the region. Considerable state investment in culture, religion and education is observable especially in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia. Turkey seems to promote its cultural and economic hegemony in the region through construction of religious institutions, universities, exchange programs, cultural centers, and Turkish courses.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> A phrase often emphasized by the Turkish nationalist or right wing Turkish political elite during 90s. Similar ideas can be found in Putin’s geo-political discourse on Eurasian integration.

<sup>2</sup> No registered 2nd language at the census of 1950 available.

<sup>3</sup> “*Turkish Bulgarians fastest-growing group of immigrants in the Netherlands*” *The Sophia Echo*, [http://www.sofiaecho.com/2009/07/21/758628\\_turkish-bulgarians-fastest-growing-group-of-immigrants-in-the-netherlands](http://www.sofiaecho.com/2009/07/21/758628_turkish-bulgarians-fastest-growing-group-of-immigrants-in-the-netherlands) (accessed 26th July 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Information obtained from personal interviews with local members of the Turkish community during local fieldworks in the Bulgarian Turkish villages in the Northeastern Bulgaria, Razgrad and Ruse region, Belovets, Pchelina, and Zdravets, in the summer of 2011 and 2012.

<sup>5</sup> The agreement was initiated as a bargaining tool during Turkey's negotiations of the 1934 Balkan Antant and was not signed by the Turkish Parliament on the basis that it aims at ethnic cleansing of the Turkish Muslims from the Yugoslavian Lands. There is no note about the deportation of the Albanians, but it foresees emigration from regions populated by both Albanians and Turks. See the text of the agreement: (Bajrami, 1990: 334-326)

<sup>6</sup> See the contemporary data on 2015 General Election results abroad at: [www.ysk.gov.tr](http://www.ysk.gov.tr)

<sup>7</sup> "2015-genel-secimleri-sonuclarina-yurtdisi-secmeni-etkisi", 14.04.2015, Source: [www.internethaber.com](http://www.internethaber.com)

<sup>8</sup> World Bank, *Migration and Remittance Flows: Recent Trends and Outlook 2013-16*, October 2, 2013

<sup>9</sup> Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Turkish Citizens Living Abroad*, [www.mfa.gov.tr](http://www.mfa.gov.tr)

<sup>10</sup> "Uluslararası Yatırım Zirvesi", [www.SonDakika.com](http://www.SonDakika.com)

<sup>11</sup> Mustafa SÖNMEZ, "Turkey at the bottom rung of ladder in investments abroad", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 27 April 2015

<sup>12</sup> This calculation is provided by Turkey's Center for Strategic Studies. See: Caner Sancaktar, "Balkanlar Türkiye İçin Neden Önemli?", *TASAM*, 27.05.2010

<sup>13</sup> Sema Erder, *Istanbul Bir Kervansaray mı?*, İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015, p.275-80.

<sup>14</sup> "Yurtdışında Yaşayan Vatandaşlarımızın Sorunlarının Araştırılarak Alınması Gereken Önlemlerin Belirlenmesi Amacıyla Kurulan Meclis Araştırma Komisyonu", *T.B.M.M. Dönem 22, Esas No. : A.01.1.GEÇ.10/8,48-91, Date.: 17.12.2003*

<sup>15</sup> The Turkish version is as follows: "Hangi ülkede yaşadıklarına bakılmaksızın Türkiye Cumhuriyetine vatandaşlık bağı ile bağlı, teröre karışmamış her birey Devletimiz için çok önemli ve değerlidir.", See: "Yurtdışında Yaşayan Vatandaşlarımızın Sorunlarının Araştırılarak Alınması Gereken Önlemlerin Belirlenmesi Amacıyla Kurulan Meclis Araştırma Komisyonu", *T.B.M.M. Dönem 22, Esas No.: A.01.1.GEÇ.10/8,48-91, Date.: 17.12.2003*

<sup>16</sup> Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun", Kanun Numarası : 5978, Kabul Tarihi : 24/3/2010, R.Gazete Tarih: 6/4/2010 Sayı : 27544, Tertip : 5 Cilt : 49

<sup>17</sup> Kosovo Turkish Justice Party (KTAP) was founded on 15 April 2013 in Mamusa. Source: <http://www.aksam.com.tr/dunya/kosovada-3uncu-turk-partisi-kuruldu/haber-187895>

<sup>18</sup> "Yurtdışında Yaşayan Vatandaşlarımızın Sorunlarının Araştırılarak Alınması Gereken Önlemlerin Belirlenmesi Amacıyla Kurulan Meclis Araştırma Komisyonu", *T.B.M.M. Dönem 22, Esas No. : A.01.1.GEÇ.10/8,48-91, Date.: 17.12.2003*

<sup>19</sup> Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun", Kanun Numarası : 5978, Kabul Tarihi : 24/3/2010, R.Gazete Tarih: 6/4/2010 Sayı : 27544, Tertip : 5 Cilt : 49

<sup>20</sup> Başbakan Yardımcısı Bozdağ'ın Bütçe Konuşması, 2013, Source:

<http://www.bekirbozdog.com.tr/haberler/78-haberler/152-basbakan-yard-mc-s-bozdog-n-buetce-konusmasi>

<sup>21</sup> Başbakan Yardımcısı Bozdağ'ın Bütçe Konuşması, 2013, Source:

<http://www.bekirbozdog.com.tr/haberler/78-haberler/152-basbakan-yard-mc-s-bozdog-n-buetce-konusmasi>

<sup>22</sup> YTB, *Kurumsal Mali Durum ve Beklentiler Raporu*, Ankara, Temmuz 2014

<sup>23</sup> *İbid.*

<sup>24</sup> "TIKA'nın Kosova'da Radikal Dinci Örgütlerle İlişkisi Var İddiaları", Source:

[http://www.cihan.com.tr/news/TIKA-nin-Kosova-da-radikal-dinci-orgutlerle-iliski-var-iddialari-TBMM-ye-tasindi\\_3876-CHMTU0Mzg3Ni8xMDA1](http://www.cihan.com.tr/news/TIKA-nin-Kosova-da-radikal-dinci-orgutlerle-iliski-var-iddialari-TBMM-ye-tasindi_3876-CHMTU0Mzg3Ni8xMDA1)

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- <sup>25</sup> “ Kosova’da Algi Operasyonu Yapiliyor”, Source:  
<http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2014/09/26/kosova-da-algi-operasyonu-yapiliyor.html#.VJCa4PmJvMM>
- <sup>26</sup> “ Kosova’da Terzi Mahalle Camisinin Acilis Toreni”, Source:  
<http://www.haberler.com/kosova-da-terzi-mahalle-camisinin-acilisini-2204234-haberi/>
- <sup>27</sup> [http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem\\_diyamet-kosovada-buyuk-bir-cami-yapacak\\_2064388.html](http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem_diyamet-kosovada-buyuk-bir-cami-yapacak_2064388.html), <http://www.diyantevakfi.org.tr/449/guncel/banglades-ve-kosovadan-tdvye-ziyaret>
- <sup>28</sup> “Diyamet’e Dev Bütçe: 2013 Yılı Bütçesi Yüzde 18.34 Arttı”, *Din Diyanet Net*,  
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- <sup>29</sup> Başbakan Yardımcısı Bekir Bozdağ’ın 2013 Eskişehir’in Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti olmasına ilişkin TBMM’deki konuşması, 2012, Source:  
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## **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; Østergaard-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 illustrate 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 transborder 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 exhortations. 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 relations with the EU, and simultaneously taking the wind out of the sails of the radical irredentist Jobbik.

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