Dániel Gazsó

An Endnote Definition for Diaspora Studies

> *"[…] although it is notorious that definitions establish nothing, in themselves they do, if they are carefully enough constructed, provide a useful orientation, or reorientation, of thought, such that an extended unpacking of them can be an effective way of developing and controlling a novel line of inquiry."*
>
> Clifford Geertz[1]

The term 'diaspora' is becoming increasingly popular. However, if we examine what we mean by this expression precisely, we come across a broad spectrum of topics such as migration, minority existence, ethnic and national affiliation, social integration, cultural assimilation, multiculturalism and various national politics. How do diaspora communities come into existence? How can we distinguish them, if at all, from other smaller communities of a similar nature established on the basis of ethnicity, national affiliation or religion? What is the relationship between the diaspora, the host country and the homeland, if there is such a thing? Should we distinguish between the various uses of the concept of diaspora in the political, everyday and academic sense? How has the semantic content of this concept changed: what did it mean in the past and what does it mean now? Why has it become so popular? This paper seeks an answer to these questions with the ultimate aim to clarify the problems surrounding the term diaspora with the help of a comprehensive and applicable definition. Since we are essentially dealing with a conceptual definition, it is worth starting by presenting the etymological roots and the semantic evolution of the given term.

'Diaspora' is a word of Greek origin, meaning dispersion. It acquired its meaning referring to the dispersion of population with the birth of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament (Septuaginta). In that translation, the Hebrew term 'galut', referring to the expulsion and casting away of the Jewish population, was rendered with the Greek word "diaspora", as a result of which the latter became commonly known as the word denoting the disper-

[1] Geertz, Clifford: *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays. New York: Basic Books. 1973. 90.*

sion of the Jews among pagans[2]. In the age of the New Testament, the word started to be used for Christian congregations as well, but this semantic content proved to be ephemeral. The decree issued by Constantine the Great in 313 A.D. elevated Christianity to the rank of state religion: from then on, Christians were not considered to be a diaspora any more within the Roman Empire[3] due to their religious affiliation. It was modern-age nationalism and the ideology of the nation-state that allowed for the expansion of the religious meaning content to include the dispersion of ethnic and national communities as well. The concept of ethnic and national diaspora was created as a result of the national question, i.e. the question of the proper relation between the imagined community of the nation and the territorial organization of the state. Despite this modern-age conceptual framework, dictionaries recently published continue to illustrate and even identify the term of diaspora with the dispersion of the Jews. Thus, the *Oxford English Dictionary* writes the following: "*The dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel*", while the *Word Reference English Dictionary* says: "*Jews living outside their homeland*" – just to cite some of the most favoured definitions.[4]

It is especially in the United States, in the 1960s-70s that the term 'diaspora' started to be used in an increasingly broader sense to refer to Armenian and Greek, then African and Irish communities (besides the Jews), and finally it was applied to any macro community living in a similarly dispersed situation.[5] This shift in the meaning of the

[2] On the Biblical origin of the term diaspora and the evolution of its religious and denominational meaning content, see Komoróczy, Géza: *Bezárkózás a nemzeti hagyományba: Az értelmiség felelőssége az ókori Keleten*. Budapest: Századvég Kiadó. 1992, especially here: 230–304.

[3] It is important to note here that with the appearance of the New Testament, the notion of diaspora was extended by a spiritual semantic meaning within Christianity, regardless of denominational affiliation. In the interpretation of the New Testament, Christians in this world can only live in a "diaspora", as their "true home" is the heavenly Jerusalem. For more on this topic, see Keményfi, Róbert: *A magyar nemzeti tér megszerkesztése: Térképzetek, térképek: fogalomtár*. (Nemzeti, vallási és hagyományos gazdálkodási terek szellemi öröksége II.) Debrecen: Bölcsész Konzorcium. 2006, especially here: 75–77.

[4] *Oxford English Dictionary* online. Last downloaded from: www.oxforddictionaries.com; 12-05-2015; *Word Reference English Dictionary* online. Last downloaded from: www.wordreference.com; 12-05-2015.

[5] Diaspora communities should be referred to as macro because in contrast to micro communities, their existence is determined not by the personal ties between their members, but by the collective imaginary of belonging to the community. The importance of the latter in the study of ethnicity and nation based macro communities was pointed out, among others, by Benedict Anderson in his famous definition of nation: "*In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inher-*

concept can be explained by four specific events according to Khachig Tölölyan, founder and editor of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* considered as the chief forum of new diaspora studies. More specifically, he uses these events to show how and why the meaning content of the term diaspora has expanded in the United States.[6] The first thing Tölölyan mentions is the Afro-American civil rights movement known as Black Power, which provided a new conceptual framework to people of colour living in the United States. Partly as a result of the achievements of this movement, the designation 'Black' was replaced by the term 'Afro-American' and finally, 'African diaspora'.

The second decisive event cited by Tölölyan is the support and political lobbying provided by the Jews living in the United States to their kin-state during the six-day war (between Israel and four Arab states from 5 to 10 June 1967). This support policy of the Jewish diaspora started a process that Tölölyan calls re-diasporization of ethnicity. Following the six-day war (ending with Israel's victory) and upon seeing the achievements of the Jewish movement, the leaders of the different ethnic communities living in the United States (Greeks, Armenians, Irish, Cubans, etc.) formulated more and more commitments urging for mutual assistance between ethnically related communities living all over the world (now called diasporas) and their kin-state. Obviously, these diasporic commitments, becoming increasingly fashionable, broadened even further the semantic content of the word 'diaspora'. Thirdly, Tölölyan highlights the approval of the *Immigration and Nationality Act* of 1965 in the United States, which banished the ethnicity and nationality based quota system. The approval and the social support for the act was a confirmation of the fact that the general opinion regarding immigration had changed radically in the United States. It gained more and more acceptance that in order for immigrants of various origins to integrate into the American society, it was not essential for them to assimilate to the dominant cultural values of the day; i.e. the newly arrived could also integrate while preserving their cultural characteristics. With such overwhelming support for multiculturalism, the significance of diaspora communities also increased. Finally, in the fourth place, Tölölyan highlights the change of focus in the interest

ently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso. 1983. 5–6.

[6] Tölölyan, Khachig: Diaspora Studies: Past, Present and Promise. *IMI Working Paper Series,* 55 (April 2012.) Last downloaded from: www.imi.ox.ac.uk, 12-05-2015.

of the scholarly world. From the 1960s, more and more studies began to be published focusing on identity, ethnic differences and cultural diversity. This scientific orientation led to the creation of brand new and interdisciplinary branches of science such as diaspora studies.

Although the four-component explanation offered by Tölölyan for the popularization of the term 'diaspora' and the expansion of its meaning content puts the United States in the centre, the usage of the word saw a similar evolution all over the world, perhaps also partly due to the changes that have occurred in the United States. It became more and more common to refer to geographically dispersed macro communities as diasporas, not only in the New World, but also in Europe and on the other continents. Due to all of the above, the word diaspora, which had originally denoted the dispersion of the Jews, was transformed into an blanket term by the 1980s-90s. By now, it has come to be used for various migrant communities (the exiled, refugees, immigrants, guest workers, etc.) and basically any ethnic, nationality or religion based macro community whose members live dispersed all over the world, far from their real or imagined homeland (or without a homeland, cf. the Roma diaspora). This is also supported by novel academic definitions of the concept such as Walker Connor's open and vague definition, now a classic, according to which a diaspora is "*[...] that segment of a people living outside the homeland*."[7] However, assigning such a broad semantic field to this term and extending its meaning so liberally raises several questions. In Rogers Brubaker's words, "*The problem with this latitudinarian, 'let-a-thousand-diasporas-bloom' approach is that the category becomes stretched to the point of uselessness [...]. If everyone is diasporic, then no one is distinctively so. The term loses its discriminating power – its ability to pick out phenomena, to make distinctions. The universalization of diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of diaspora.*"[8]

Before moving on to narrowing down and specifying the conceptual definition of diaspora as well as determining its criteria, dimensions and semantic domains, we briefly need to explore a social theoretical question relevant for diaspora studies: the problematics of group-based and essentializing approach, which was pointed out the most explicitly by American sociologist Rogers Brubaker quoted above. In his study entitled *Ethnicity Without Groups*, he introduced

[7] Connor, Walker: The impact of homelands upon diasporas. In: Sheffer, Gabriel (ed.): *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*. London: Croom Helm. 1986. 16.

[8] Brubaker, Rogers: The 'diaspora' diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 2005, 28 (1). 3. Last downloaded from: www.tandfonline.com, 12-05-2015.

another piece of relevant terminology that has been widely used ever since: the notion of groupism.[9] This refers to the tendency to treat communities – distinguished on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, origin or religion (Romas, Hungarians, Afro-Americans, Jews, etc.) – as internally homogeneous and externally bounded firm groups that have their own interests, their common goals and their specific activities. Consequently, we perceive of these macro communities as if they were the basic constituents of social life, the chief protagonists of social conflicts and the fundamental units of social analysis. While this groupism approach is not surprising in everyday and political life, but rather normal, it can have a particularly harmful effect on the analysis and interpretation of social phenomena in the academic world. As Brubaker put it, "*[...] some common sense social categories – and notably common sense ethnic and racial categories – tend to be essentializing and naturalizing. They are the vehicles of what has been called a 'participants' primordialism' or a 'psychological essentialism'. We obviously cannot ignore such common sense primordialism. But that does not mean we should simply replicate it in our scholarly analyses or policy assessments. […] We must, of course, take vernacular categories and participants' understandings seriously, for they are partly constitutive of our objects of study. But we should not uncritically adopt* categories of ethnopolitical practice *as our* categories of social analysis."[10]

As opposed to the groupist approach, Brubaker, so as to save the academic nature of scholarly writings, proposed a classical solution: instead of treating ethnic and national communities as groups, we should view them as practical categories. "*A focus on categories, in short, can illuminate the multifarious ways in which ethnicity, race and nationhood can exist and 'work' without the existence of ethnic groups as substantial entities.*"[11] If I have qualified Brubaker's solution to the tendency of groupism as "classical", it is because this kind of theoretical distinction between group and category is not unprece-

---

[9] Brubaker, Rogers: Ethnicity Without Groups. *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie.* 2002, 43 (2). 163–189.; Brubaker, Rogers: *Ethnicity without groups.* Harvard: Harvard UP. 2004.
Earlier versions of the paper published in the journal and volume cited here were presented by Brubaker at several forums, among them in Budapest on 20 March 2001 at Central European University. The material of the latter talk was also published in Hungarian. Brubaker, Rogers: Csoportok nélküli etnicitás. *Beszélő.* 2001. 6 (7–8). 60–66.

[10] Brubaker, Rogers: Ethnicity Without Groups. *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie.* 2002, 43 (2). 163–189, here: 165–166.

[11] Brubaker, Rogers: Ethnicity Without Groups. *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie.* 2002, 43 (2). 163–189, here: 170.

dented in the history of social sciences. As Richard Jenkins observed, "*The classification of human collectivities is basic to sociology and anthropology. One useful way to do this is to distinguish between* groups *and* categories *[...] A group is rooted [...] in processes of internal definition, while a category is externally defined. This distinction is, in the first instance, concerned with the procedures that sociologists and anthropologists employ to constitute the human world as a proper object for systematic empirical inquiry and theorization.*"[12] Besides distinguishing between group and category, there is another research method for drawing the line between the internal and the external perspective that social scientists, especially cultural anthropologists use as one of the cornerstones of ethnographic fieldwork. This methodology derives from the duality of the emic and etic approach, a pair of concepts created by Kenneth Lee Pike, on the analogy of the linguistic terms 'phonemic' and 'phonetic' by clipping the prefix phon.[13] By emic approach, we mean the perspective and interpretation of the native person, the participant, the field subject, while the etic approach refers to the perspective and interpretation of the external observer, the interpreter, the researcher. These two approaches are merged in the technique of participant observation, which constitutes the basis of ethnographic fieldwork.[14] Another example for the differentiation between group and category à la Brubaker, or to be more precise, the theoretical distinction of the political, everyday and scientific approaches of ethnicity, is Thomas Hylland Eriksen's distinction between native concepts and analytical concepts. We can read more about that in the first chapter of Eriksen's book entitled *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives,* published in 1993: "*The final problem to be discussed in this chapter concerns the relationship between anthropological concepts and their subject matter. This is a problem with complicated ramifications, and it concerns the relationships between (i) anthropological theory and 'native theory', (ii) anthropological theory and social organization, and (iii) 'native' theory and social organization.*"[15]

---

[12] Jenkins, Richard: *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations.* London: Sage Press. 1997. 56.

[13] On the theoretical and practical foundations of emic and etic approach, see Harris, Marvin – Headland, Thomas Neil – Pike, Kenneth Lee (eds.): *Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate.* Newbury Park, California: Sage. 1990.

[14] On the basics of qualitative ethnographic research methods, see Bogdan, Robert – Taylor, Steven J.: *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Phenomenological Approach to the Social Sciences.* New York: John Wiley and Sons. 1975.

[15] Eriksen, Thomas Hylland: *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives.* London: Pluto Press. 1993. 16.

Going back to Brubaker's ideas, if we make a distinction between categories and groups, we will be able to observe the relationship between the two without presupposing it a priori. When studying a specific ethnic community, this allows us to investigate how ethnicity works in politics and ordinary life without considering the community as a firm group and making it the fundamental unit of our analysis. In this way, we can examine those political, social and cultural processes through which a given category gets invested with groupness. We can examine the categories *from above*, studying their promotion, institutionalization, construction, i.e. how, why and when a certain community is identified with a certain category. We may also study them *from below*, focusing on those socio-cognitive processes through which individuals attach emotional associations and value judgements to categories. Brubaker borrowed this double perspective (the 'from above' and 'from below' approaches of ethnic and national categories) from nationalism researcher Eric J. Hobsbawm and developed it further. In his book entitled *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Hobsbawm made the following fundamental claim on the subject: "*Nations and their associated phenomena [...] are, in my view, dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analysed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist.*"[16] Brubaker applied this dual perspective in Cluj-Napoca (along with three fellow researchers) when studying the issue of Hungarian and Romanian national existence in this Transylvanian town from *above* (at the level of the political constructs of nation) and from *below* (at the level of manifestations of everyday ethnicity) By no means does this kind of reconsideration of ethnicity and nationhood imply that we would question their realness: it only means that we analyse them differently. As Brubaker phrased it, "*[...] the reality of ethnicity and nationhood – and the overriding power of ethnic and national identifications in some settings – does not depend on the existence of ethnic groups or nations as substantial groups or entities.*"[17]

What all of the above means with respect to diaspora studies is that instead of conceptualizing diaspora communities as bounded, tangible, enduring and concrete collectivities, we study them in terms of relational and dynamic notions as cultural idioms, cogni-

[16] Hobsbawm, Eric J.: *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 1990. 10.

[17] Brubaker, Rogers: Ethnicity Without Groups. *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie,* 2002, 43 (2). 163–189, here: 168.

tive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects and contingent events, thus as practical categories. In this way, our focus of attention is not the diaspora community as an internally homogeneous, externally limited and numerically describable group, but the diverse and ever changing phenomenon of existing as a diaspora.

Although the above outlined discrimination between 'group' and 'category' raises further theoretical questions – the elaboration of which would probably require a separate paper –, we can draw important methodological conclusions from it. Brubaker's claims regarding groupism shed light on the fact that communities organized on ethnic, national or religious basis are not static creations, but dynamic and multi-dimensional phenomena. In consideration of the above and summing up definitions and perceptions of diaspora, I will now enumerate those criteria the combination of which allows us to decide which dispersed macro communities should be designated as diasporas and which should not. A definition will then emerge from the totality of these criteria. In the interpretative explanations of the criteria making up the definition, I will elaborate on the relations as well as on the identical and differing features of emigration, ethnic and national minority regarded as autochthonous, the Hungarian term 'szórvány' (the semantic content of which makes it a 'hungaricum') and other types of dispersed communities on the one hand and the concept of diaspora on the other. Based on the above, I offer the following endnote definition for diaspora studies:

The category of diaspora denotes such 1) geographically dispersed macro communities of migratory origin 2) which have integrated into the society surrounding them, but have not fully assimilated, and 3) which have symbolic or objective relations with kin communities living in other areas, but believed to be of identical origin, and with their real or imagined ancestral homeland or kin-state.

1) …geographically dispersed macro communities of migratory origin…

Perhaps the most generally accepted criterion regarding communities called diasporas is their migratory origin. This does not primarily refer to actual migration personally experienced, but the manifestation of the event of migration in the collective conscience and its symbolic community shaping force. Partly, this is what provides the grounds for the internal self-identification and the external assessment of diaspora communities as such. In this sense, the significance of migratory origin surpasses even that of otherness, i.e. of cultural,

ethnic, linguistic or religious distinctive features, for what makes a diaspora community so "different" from the social and cultural environment surrounding it is that it derives its origin from elsewhere, even when the members of the given community did not personally experience the process of migration.

It is the criterion of migratory origin that sets diaspora communities apart from ethnic and national minorities regarded as autochthonous. What I have in mind primarily are those communities whose ethnic or national frameworks have been consolidated within the frameworks of other nation-states (such as the Basque or Catalan communities that have territorial autonomy in Spain), or those communities which due to the modification of the borders, have found themselves outside the borders of the kin-state and continued to evolve there (such as Hungarian ethnic minorities residing in the areas detached from historic Hungary). While in the case of a diaspora, it is the cohesive force of the migration from the place of origin present in the collective conscience that matters the most, for the latter ethnic and national communities, it is the naturalness of staying in the same location, preserving their contact with the native land and the historic past linked to one's habitat, in other words, the group-forming force of indigenousness and autochthonous existence that is crucial. The importance of this difference lies not only in self-identification and external definitions, but also in the evolution of the institutional frameworks of the various community types and the demands formulated towards the mainstream society by the organizations and political players representing those communities. Whereas diaspora organizations fight mostly for the conditions enabling integration into the mainstream society, i.e. against negative discrimination, the organizations of the ethnic, national and regional minorities perceived as autochthonous often go beyond these objectives. They demand some level of sovereignty for the minority, i.e. cultural, political or territorial autonomy (see the demands autonomy of Hungarians in Upper Hungary, Subcarpathia, Transylvania and Vojvodina), or they put forward separatist demands and may even strive to establish a new nation-state (see Catalan separatism). However, it is only on the level of theory that this kind of distinctive line can be drawn with such precision. In practice, there are overlaps and exceptions (see the successful attempt of the Jewish diaspora to found their own state in the creation of the state of Israel). As James Clifford put it, "*Lines too strictly drawn between 'original' inhabitants (who often themselves replaced prior populations) and subsequent immigrants risk ahistoricism. With all these qualifications, however, it is clear that the claims to political legitimacy made by peoples who have inhab-*

ited a territory since before recorded history and those who arrived by steamboat or airplane will be founded on very different principles."[18]

At this point, before going on to explain the remaining criteria for diasporas, I need to digress a bit and clarify the concept of 'szórvány' (diaspora as dispersed communities in Hungarian). As a cultural anthropologist focused on the study of Hungarian communities abroad, I stress the importance of the meaning and usage of this Hungarian concept, because in many cases it is automatically translated into the word diaspora, whereas the Hungarian equivalent of diaspora is also used in Hungarian ('diaszpóra') as a foreign loan word, but with different meaning than 'szórvány'. Therefore it is necessary to clarify this terminological confusion. When and why did the meanings of these two originally synonymous expressions diverge? What does each of them mean in Hungarian usage? How is the issue of differentiating between migratory origin and autochthonousness expressed by them?

The term 'szórvány' first appears in those 19th-century surveys which were supposed to map out the religious distribution of the population of the historical Hungary. At that time, 'szórvány' – just like the term diaspora in international usage – entered Hungarian common knowledge as a notion referring to denominations. The expansion of its semantic content to include ethnic and national affiliation as well – again, similarly to the development of diaspora in international usage – can be traced back to the spreading of national ideologies in the region. With the intensification of ethnic efforts, threatening the unity of the Hapsburg Empire, the formation of irreconcilable (minority) linguistic and (imperial) official nationalisms and the spread of the cultural nation approach of national belonging, scholarly research focusing on social order used more and more sophisticated theoretical and methodological tools to map out the geographical and demographic situation of the nationalities and ethnicities of the Carpathian Basin.[19] The main objective of this research was to show the exact location, headcount, proportion and population density of statistically distinguished ethnic

[18] Clifford, James: Diasporas. *Cultural Anthropology.* 1994, 9 (3). 302–338, here: 309.

[19] On the notions of linguistic nationalism and official nationalism, see Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London:* Verso. 1983. 5–6, especially here: 83–112.; On the historical foundations of the cultural nation approach, see Meinecke, Friedrich: *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat: Studien zur genesis des deutschen nationalstaates.* München: R. Oldenbourg. 1908.; Kohen, Hans: *The Idea of Nationalism.* New York: The Macmillan Company. 1944.; On the same topic with Hungarian references see Szűcs, Jenő: *Nemzet és történelem.* Budapest: Gondolat. 1974, especially here: 23–42.

and national communities living in the country. The advancement of the new scientific disciplines serving this purpose also extended the terminology of nationality studies. During this process, the Hungarian notion of 'szórvány' was matched with the semantic fields of ethnicity and nationhood while 'diaszpóra', a term of Greek origin remained within the conceptual domain of religious denominations. The above claim is also supported by the scholarly analyses carried out around the turn of the 19th-20th centuries. A prime example among them is the brochure written in Hungarian and forwarded by the Prime Minister's Office as strictly confidential to the heads of state authorities in 1908, calling their attention to the significance of the ethnographic maps just then prepared by the Hungarian Royal Statistical Office that were supposed to map out the spatial situation of national belonging and fluency in Hungarian. In this brochure, the term 'szórvány' obviously refers to national affiliation: "*Without these maps, it is barely possible to control the appropriate national policy aimed at the national protection of Hungarian linguistic borders, linguistic islands and 'szórványs', therefore I do not need to stress their extraordinary importance.*"[20] Such map drawing resulted, among others, in Count Pál Teleki's famous "Carte Rouge", which presented the distribution of Hungary's population by nationalities on the basis of the 1910 census data.[21]

Following World War I, with the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the drawing of the new state borders laid

[20] For the full text of the brochure quoted from the Prime Minister's Office and the analysis of the term "szórvány" in it, see Keményfi, Róbert: "...A magyar nyelv határok, nyelvszigetek és szórványok védelme ügyében..." Dokumentumok a századfordulós magyar nemzetiségi politika térbeli törekvéseiről. In Kovács, Nóra – Osvát, Anna – Szarka, László (eds.): *Tér és terep III*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó. 2004. 119–131.

[21] Count Pál Teleki's map was the result of completely novel and unique scientific efforts. No map had ever been prepared before that would have presented population density and ethnic distribution on the same page. Teleki solved this task by indicating the various ethnicities with different colours and in proportion of their numbers. Since then, this technique has become an established method in demographic map making. In harmony with the international conventions, Teleki marked the mainstream society (in this case, Hungarians) with red. This is why this map, having become famous during the near-Paris peace talks closing World War I, was baptized the Red Map (in French: *Carte Rouge*). On 16 January 1920, it was with the help of this map that Count Albert Apponyi, the head of the Hungarian peace delegation illustrated to the representatives present on behalf of the entente powers the number of Hungarians living in the areas that were to be cut off from historical Hungary. For more information on this, see the journal entry of 16 January 1920 by Jenő Benda. Benda, Jenő: *A béke kálváriaútján: Egy újságíró naplója a párizsi békekonferenciáról*. Kisebbségekért Budapest: Pro Minoritate Alapítvány – Méry Ratio. 2013. 59–65.

down in the Treaty of Trianon, the Hungarian approach to the issue of nationhood as well as the topics of Hungarian minority studies changed radically. While before the Great War, the prevailing topic was ethnic and national heterogeneity inside the country, now the situation of the Hungarian communities stuck outside the borders of Hungary provided the focus of attention. Consequently, the semantic content of the term 'szórvány' was also transformed: the principle of denominational/national affiliation was replaced by the principle of autochthon/allochthon. "*'Szórványs' may be created in two ways*", Ödön Nagy writes in number 4/1938 of the journal *Hitel*. "*Number one is when one or two Hungarian families settle down in a foreign-language area as dayworkers, industrial workers, craftsmen, farmers or clerks. Number two is when a historically Hungarian settlement (village, town, region) gradually loses so many of its inhabitants that its organizations, institutions become weaker or are closed down, so such communities will no longer be able to carry a substantial role in the life of our culture. Later on, it loses its racial identity along with its tongue, and it steps on the road of assimilation.*"[22]

Today the meaning of the term 'szórvány' has been narrowed down to denote the latter kind of community in Hungarian scholarly literature: i.e. ethnic and national communities that have become minorities in their own environment and which have been slowly losing their bloc-like presence due to assimilation. On the other hand, the term 'diaszpóra' is used to refer to minority communities having taken shape due to migration. This conceptual distinction was also pointed out by Balázs Balogh, Barna Bodó and Zoltán Ilyés in the preface of the anthology edited by them and published in 2007, which offers a comprehensive insight into the theoretical and practical issues of researching 'szórvány' communities: "*In Hungarian public discourse as well as in scholarly literature in history and folklore, the term 'szórvány' is primarily applied to Hungarians living not in a uniform bloc as a majority, but mixed with other ethnic groups and in minority in the areas of historical Hungary annexed by successor and neighbouring states following the Peace Treaty of Trianon. While the concept of 'diaszpóra' conventionally implies a strong emphasis on dispersion and migration, the notion of 'szórvány' for domestic (Hungarian) use highlights the semantic component of the 'residual status', regression and the threat of disappearance.*"[23] Such a sharp distinction between 'szórvány' and 'diaszpóra' – attaching such

[22] Nagy, Ödön: Szórvány és beolvadás. *Hitel*. 1938, 4. 257–276, here: 258.

[23] Balogh, Balázs – Bodó, Barna – Ilyés, Zoltán: Preface. In Idem (eds.): *Regionális identitás, közösségépítés, szórványgondozás*. Budapest: Lucidus. 2007. 7–12, here: 8.

different semantic content to them raises the problem of how to differentiate between the above mentioned autochthonous communities and communities of migratory origin. Róbert Keményfi illustrated the above dilemma with examples: "*Although the distinction autochthonous ('szórvány') vs. allochthonous ('diaszpóra') seems to be helpful, this principle of differentiation can be contested in many cases. Consider to what extent a Hungarian Protestant community in Mezőség (Câmpia Transilvaniei) is different as a 'szórvány' from a Hungarian Roman Catholic community that settled down there in the 19th century. But we could also mention the example of the ongoing (e) migration of ethnic Hungarians from the neighbouring countries, be it to the old kin-state or to other countries of Europe.*"[24] Although we might criticize the Hungarian usage of the term 'szórvány', it is not advisable to disregard its specificities. From a scientific perspective, our task is not to accept or falsify the political or everyday distinctions between 'szórvány' (autochthonous) and 'diaszpóra' (allochthonous) communities, but to interpret them. The diverging meaning contents of the two terms 'szórvány' and 'diaszpóra' in Hungarian usage is especially important in the translation of those articles originally written in Hungarian that deal specifically with the categorization, historical evolution and demographic and legal situation of ethnic Hungarian communities living outside the borders of Hungary and considered to be autochthonous there. In this case, for lack of precise conceptual definitions, there is a risk that the studies originally written in Hungarian, in which the notion of 'szórvány' is automatically translated into English as diaspora, will be misinterpreted by the readers. Thus the conflicts generated by the border changes and the topics of the Central and Eastern European national question can be easily mixed up with the issues of migratory processes and dispersed existence.

Finally, migratory origin – as the basic criterion for the category of diaspora – does not mean that the act of leaving behind a certain place, a physical change of location or the geographical dispersion of an entire people would necessarily lead to the formation of diaspora communities in every case. Neither transit travellers, nor temporary immigrants should be placed in the category of diaspora. Therefore, it is necessary, but not sufficient to take migratory origin into consideration. Further criteria need to be determined.

[24] Keményfi, Róbert: *A magyar nemzeti tér megszerkesztése: Térképzetek, térképek: fogalomtár.* (Nemzeti, vallási és hagyományos gazdálkodási terek szellemi öröksége II.) Debrecen: Bölcsész Konzorcium. 2006. 85–86.

2) ... which have integrated into the society surrounding them, but have not fully assimilated...

When it comes to the general description of diasporas, besides migratory origin, several researchers have devoted a lot of attention to the quality of the relation of these dispersed communities with the society around them. (Naturally, these two factors, i.e. migratory origin, or rather, the reasons leading to emigration and integration into the society of the host country are closely related to each other.) A milestone in the scientific foundation of this topic is John A. Amstrong's diaspora typology. In his writing entitled *Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas*, published in 1979, Amstrong divided diaspora communities into two types according to their manner of integration into the society of the host country.

On the one hand, he used the expression 'proletarian diaspora' for those communities of migratory origin that lived in a marginal and disadvantaged position on the periphery of their new home. As an example, he mentioned European peasants having migrated overseas in masses at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries. On the other hand, he referred to those dispersed communities as 'mobilized diasporas' that achieved a distinguished social status for themselves and which were able to influence and mobilize the operation, economy or even foreign relations of the host countries. Within the latter kind of diaspora, Amstrong distinguished between two subtypes: the *archetypal* version of mobilized diasporas, characterized by the perennial and durable nature of their distinguished status, and its *situational* version whose prestigious position is limited in time, and which is characterized by a long-term assimilation into the mainstream society.[25] (The latter distinction is not surprising, for Amstrong's main research area focused on the Jewish and German communities living in the tsarist Russia, whose situation fitted perfectly the archetypal and situational subcategories of mobilized diasporas.)

Another, equally classical diaspora typology that places a great emphasis on integration into the society of the host country originates from Robin Cohen. In his book *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* published in 1997, Cohen distinguishes between the following five "ideal types of diaspora": 1) *victim* diaspora, which is the classic example of population dispersion; i.e. not voluntary, but aggressive or forced migration, diaspora formed due to persecution or famine and misery; 2) *labour* diaspora, which basically corresponds to Amstrong's

[25] Armstrong, John A.: Mobilized and proletarian diasporas. *American Political Science Review*. 1976, 70 (2). 393–408.

proletarian diaspora; 3) *imperial* diaspora, whose origin goes back to the times of the great conquests and territorial expansions; 4) *trade* diaspora; 5) *deterritorialized* diaspora, related to post-modern, hybrid and cultural population dispersion.[26] In the past decades, several diaspora typologies of this kind have seen the light. We could mention, among others, Michael Bruneau's four-component typology (*entrepreneurial, religious, political* as well as *racial and cultural* diaspora types), and Milton J. Esman three-component typology (*settler, labour* and *entrepreneurial* diaspora types).[27]

These formal typologies can be criticized from several aspects, especially because they still assign too broad a meaning content to the concept of diaspora. Nonetheless, they indicate the importance of social integration in the definition of this notion, i.e. the process of fitting into the society of the host country. In the end, this is what sets diasporas apart from transit travellers and temporary immigrants. However, for a community of migratory origin to become a diaspora community, it needs to resist cultural assimilation while integrating socially; that is, it needs to preserve its "otherness" with respect to the majority society of the host country. This does not mean that the internal cultural characteristics of the diaspora communities will be preserved irrespective of space and time (that would contradict the dynamically changing nature of culture after all), but that the ethnic boundaries constituting the foundation of cultural otherness become long-lasting between a given diaspora community and its social environment. The theoretical framework of the concept of ethnic boundaries in this sense was elaborated by cultural anthropologist Fredrik Barth. Barth's basic thesis affirmed that ethnicity is determined by the way individuals belonging to different ethnic groups interact with each other and express certain cultural aspects in harmony with the context. By that, Barth called into question the view generally accepted until then, namely that ethnicity is the sum of unaltered cultural characteristics (mother tongue, belief system, customs, traditions, moral and aesthetic norms, attachment to a certain location, etc.) on the basis of which any person's ethnic affiliation can be automatically and objectively identified. Barth's theory directed attention from cultural specificities to ethnic boundaries, which

[26] Cohen, Robin: *Global Diasporas: An Introduction.* London – New York: Routledge – Taylor and Francis Group. 1997.

[27] Bruneau, Michel: Diasporas, transnational spaces and communities. In Baubock, Rainer – Faist, Thomas (eds.): *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP. 2010. 35–50.; Esman, Milton J.: Definition and classes of diaspora. In Idem: *Diasporas in the Contemporary World.* Cambridge – Malden: Polity. 2009. 13–21.

represented a paradigm shift in the scientific approach of ethnicity. "*The critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic* boundary *that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses.*"[28] Despite their permeability, ethnic boundaries have proved to be more persistent than cultural characteristics, which – especially in the case of diaspora communities – are in constant transformation as a result of environmental effects and contact with other cultures.

Social integration and ethnic boundaries maintenance do not happen overnight. More time needs to elapse before it turns out whether a community of migratory origin is capable of fitting into the society surrounding it while maintaining its ethnic boundaries and transmitting the desire to exist as a distinguished ethnicity from one generation to another. Existing as a diaspora is basically a long-term phenomenon, characterized by the permanence of "living among strangers". Consequently, one of the crucial criteria of diasporas is the time factor.[29]

It is important to note here that in light of the above, the expression 'new diaspora', which has become increasingly popular, is the result of incorrect usage. In Hungarian scholarly literature and public discourse, it is common to designate as 'new diaspora' ('új diaszpóra') the totality of Hungarians having emigrated abroad – mostly for economic reasons – following the political changeover of 1989 and the country's EU accession in 2004. However, we cannot yet be sure of the following: will these people turn into a diaspora or not? Will they stay abroad or will they eventually move back home? Will they be able to integrate into the society of their host country or will they move on to another one? Will they participate in the community life of the local Hungarian diaspora or will they stay outside of it? Will they pass on the desire to maintain ethnic boundaries to their children or will they assimilate? Only time can answer these questions. But until then, it is more advisable to use the expression 'new emigration' (instead of 'new diaspora') for those who have gone abroad with the new waves of emigration.

---

[28] Barth, Fredrik: Introduction. In Idem (ed.): *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. 1969. 9–38, here: 15.

[29] On the significance of ethnic boundaries and the time factor in the conceptual definition of diasporas, see Chaliand, Gérard – Rageau, Jean-Pierre: *Atlas des diasporas*. Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob. 1991.; Fejős, Zoltán: Diaszpóra és az „amerikai magyarok" – háttér egy fogalom alkalmazhatóságához. In Kovács, Nóra (ed.): *Tanulmányok a diaszpóráról*. Budapest: Gondolat – MTA Etnikai-nemzeti Kisebbségkutató Intézet. 2005. 9–24.; Brubaker, Rogers: The 'diaspora' diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 2005, 28 (1).

3) ... which have symbolic or objective relations with kin communities living in other areas, but believed to be of identical origin, and with their real or imagined ancestral homeland or kin-state.

"*Diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational moment*", Khachig Tölölyan observed in the first number of the already mentioned journal *Diaspora* published in 1991.[30] Although the cornerstones of the category of diaspora are constituted by migratory origin and ethnic boundaries maintenance, the manifestation of its current forms means a lot more than that. Migratory processes and ethnic boundaries existed as early as in the Middle Ages – in fact, at the time of the migration of peoples, a greater proportion of the population must have lived in emigration than nowadays. However, in those days, seldom (and only in the case of religious communities) was there a possibility for related communities dispersed all over the world to establish transnational contacts with each other reaching across borders. This network of relations is also one of the decisive criteria of the category of diaspora in a narrow sense, the formation of which has been facilitated the most by the conditions of the present age. The appearance of means of transportation opening up new horizons for human mobility, the increasingly fast development of communication and information technologies and their widespread use, the international flow of capital, the global currents of various ideologies and concepts, all in all, the processes of globalization have induced such conditions that make it possible for macro communities organized on ethnic, national or religious basis and dispersed in the world to create a diasporic existence. Tölölyan calls these communities the emblematic incarnations of transnational existence because he thinks that with their relationships reaching over state borders, they surpass the national question (i.e. the problematics of the non-correspondence of the territorial borders of the state and the imagined limits of the nation), and in this way, by their mere existence, they call into question the importance of nation-states in the evolution of social structures in the modern age. All of the above was also pointed out by Arjun Appadurai, one of the most renowned experts of global and local conditions in his seminal work *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* published in 1996: "*The story of mass migrations (voluntary and forced) is hardly a new feature of human history. But when it is juxtaposed with the rapid flow of*

[30] Tölölyan, Khachig: The Nation-State and Its Others: In Lieu of a Preface. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies.* 1991. 1. 3–7, here: 5.

mass-mediated images, scripts, and sensations, we have a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities. As Turkish guest workers in Germany watch Turkish films in their German flats, as Koreans in Philadelphia watch the 1988 Olympics in Seoul through satellite feeds from Korea, and as Pakistani cabdrivers in Chicago listen to cassettes of sermons recorded in mosques in Pakistan or Iran, we see moving images meet deterritorialized viewers. These create diasporic public spheres, phenomena that confound theories that depend on the continued salience of the nation-state as the key arbiter of important social changes."[31]

The processes of globalization, or to use Appadurai's term, "global cultural flows", the most conspicuous outcome of which is the dynamically changing connection network of diaspora communities reaching across state borders, mean the end of the age of nation-states in the eyes of many. However, it is questionable whether the sum of these processes will create a homogeneous and transnational world in which the national efforts of the state authorities and governments become insignificant. Experience seems to indicate that national identity constitutes the basis of self-identification and world order up to this day (even in the case of diasporas, especially if they are organized on a national basis.) Of course, this does not mean that national efforts are present in the same form as they were in the early period of the birth of modern nation-states. Nationalisms – just like other ideologies, public cultures and political religions – are constantly changing: they continuously adapt to the new social, political, economic and cultural circumstances. So the question is not whether we are witnessing the end of the age of nation-states, but how the processes of globalization shape the generic goals of nationalism (i.e. national identity, national autonomy and national unity) and what effects they have on the local level, in the everyday manifestations of ethnic and national belonging and in interethnic relations. The importance of this question is also underlined by Appadurai at the end of his book cited: "*While only time will tell whether our current preoccupations with the nation-state are justified, the beginnings of an anthropological engagement with this issue are evident in the increasing contribution of anthropologists to the problematics of the nation-state [...]. Some of this work explicitly considers the global context of national cultural formations [...]. Yet a framework for relating the global, the national, and the local has*

[31] Appadurai, Arjun: *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1996. 4.

yet to emerge."[32] As will be shown below, diaspora studies may have a major role in the elaboration of this interpretative framework.

Besides migratory origin, the ethnic boundaries maintenance and the relations with kin communities believed to be of identical origin, another fundamental criterion for macro communities categorized as diasporas is their attachment to a certain place of origin, real or imagined ancestral homeland or kin-state. This is what distinguishes diasporas the most markedly from other ethnic or religious minority communities of migratory origin. (Consequently, Catholic congregations dispersed all over the world or Roma minorities also living in numerous places do not constitute a diaspora because their community existence does not depend on a collective attachment to a given ancestral homeland or kin-state.) This criterion is also greatly emphasized by contemporary researchers when defining the term diaspora, one of the most emblematic examples of which is the oft-cited diaspora definition by William Safran. Taking Walker Connor's classic open definition (i.e. "that segment of a people living outside the homeland"), Safran attempts to complete it by setting up the following criteria: "*Lest the term lose all meaning, I suggest that Connor's definition be extended and that the concept of diaspora be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: 1) they or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral' or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.*"[33] This definition by Safran can be disputed from several aspects. On the one hand, as we have seen earlier, diasporic existence is not necessarily coupled with the

[32] Appadurai, Arjun: *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1996. 188.

[33] Safran, William: *Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return. Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies.* 1991, 1. 83–99, here: 83–84.

feeling of exclusion, isolation and alienation. Diaspora communities can integrate into the society around them without fully assimilating and losing their ethnic boundaries. Another crucial point of Safran's definition is the so-called myth of return. Though collective attachment to the place of origin may launch new waves of migration, in most cases, it is settlement in the host country that characterizes diaspora communities. Safran was most likely motivated by the paradigmatic case of the Jewish diaspora when he inserted the feeling of isolation and the myth of return so emphatically into the definition of diaspora. Nonetheless, he did shed light on the fact that one of the essential characteristics of these community types – besides their migratory origin – is their subjective, emotional or objective, pragmatic relationship maintained with the ancestral homeland.

According to the present interpretation, the relationship between the diaspora and the ancestral homeland does not refer to the feeling of homesickness or nostalgia for the home, but rather to the special orientation of a given community towards a real or imagined place of origin, which appears in the collective consciousness as the authentic source of the cultural values, ethnic, national or religious identity and loyalty of this community. This relationship is quite special if this place of origin appears not only in the collective memory, but also in the shape of a specific state. The frameworks of this state were most likely formed during the ideology of nation-states (as it was the case with most modern states). Moreover, this state may have such economic and legal support policies that affect certain diaspora communities directly. In this case, we are not only dealing with an imagined ancestral homeland, but a concrete kin-state (also called 'old country' by most European emigrants and their descendants living outside of Europe or 'mother country' as a literary translation of the word 'anyaország' in Hungarian or 'external national homeland' in Brubaker's terms) which has not only a symbolic relationship with the diaspora community, but an objective one. Thus, the appearance of diasporas in institutional frameworks in today's societies does not necessarily mean the end of the age of modern nation-states. In fact, besides creating diasporic public spheres, global cultural flows also allow for the global propagation of nationalist ideologies (among them, the ideal of the nation-state).

According to Rogers Brubaker's definition, "*A state becomes an external national 'homeland' for 'its' ethnic diaspora when political or cultural elites define ethnonational kin in other states as members of one and the same nation, claim that they 'belong', in some sense, to the state, and assert that their condition must be monitored and their interests protected and promoted by the state; and when the state*

actually does take action in the name of monitoring, promoting, or protecting the interests of its ethnonational kin abroad."[34] Similarly to the other two pillars of his triadic nexus theory, "national minority" and "nationalizing state", Brubaker describes the concept of the 'external national homeland' with the help of the term of "field" elaborated and applied by Pierre Bourdieu.[35] According to this interpretation, the kin-state should be conceived not as a given, analytically irreducible, fixed entity but rather in terms of the field of differentiated and competitive positions or stances adopted by different parties, or individual political entrepreneurs competing for power.

Kin-state policies cannot be generalized, but as shown by the definition cited above, they all agree on the axiom that beyond the boundaries of state and citizenship, there is a common national existence that makes the state responsible not only for its own citizens, but also for communities and individuals living in other states, but perceived to be of identical nationality. However, what this responsibility entails exactly, that is, by what specific political strategy it can and should be satisfied, can be interpreted in a number of ways and it raises a lot of questions. Should the kin-state provide moral, financial or even legal support to ethnonational relatives living in other countries? Should it promote their staying where they are, helping them to get by, or should it help them return to the kin-state? What kind of legal privileges, if any, should the state offer to them (in terms of immigration, settlement, employment or even citizenship)? Should it distinguish between national minorities living in foreign territories as a result of border changes and diaspora communities formed through emigration? Kin-state policies seek an answer to such questions. Consequently, the stands or positions of this political *field* show divergence not only between the various states, but they

---

[34] Brubaker, Rogers: *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 1996. 58. It is important to note here that Brubaker makes no difference between autochthonous national minorities formed as a result of border changes and diaspora communities of migratory origin. The primary objective of his book cited above is to set up new interpretative frames for Eastern and Central European nationalisms. He attempts to do that by presenting the national question typical of this region through the triadic nexus of "national minority" formed in the wake of 20th century border changes, "nationalizing state" and "external national homeland". As it is clear from the above, Brubaker's book is not about diaspora communities of migratory origin in the present sense, but some of its parts (especially its claims regarding kin-state policies) can be useful in the interpretative explanation of the relationship between the diaspora and the kin-state.

[35] For Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, see Bourdieu, Pierre – Loic, Wacquant: *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology.* Chicago: UP of Chicago. 1992.

can be versatile or even contradictory within the same state as well. Moreover, these kin-state policies compete not only with each other, but also with those stands that reject the basic premise of the kin-state: the ideal of the trans-border cultural nation what follows the responsibility toward ethnonational relatives living abroad. But even if the latter stand prevails, and the heads of state refute the general axiom of kin-state, there is still a possibility that the representatives of the diaspora communities conceive of the given state as a kin-state and behave accordingly. Let me add here that the relationship of those living in a diaspora is neither uniform with the kin-state, nor can it be generalized. Opinions are divided in this question, and not only between the different diaspora communities, but also within them. However, the emphasis is not on the quality of the relationship between the diaspora and the kin-state (or the ancestral homeland), but about the fact of the relationship itself, which is a crucial criterion for this type of community.

All in all, studying the specific cases of the category of diaspora *from above* (at the level of diaspora policies and kin-state policies) and *from below* (at the level of the everyday manifestations of the diaspora existence) offers an excellent opportunity to explore the novel forms of appearance of nationalisms: the interpretation of the relations of global, national and local formations in the present age.