

Final Report

Visegrád Scholarship at the Open Society Archives

June 28 – July 30, 2021

Project Title: *Diaspora Politics in the Cold War: The Documentation of State and Diaspora Relations of the Kádár Regime by Radio Free Europe*

My research at OSA aimed at investigating the state-diaspora nexus between the Hungarian People's Republic and the Hungarian diasporic communities. The focal point of the research was the documentation of the diaspora engagement policies¹ of the Kádár regime by Radio Free Europe. The rationale of the research is to point out the shortcomings of modern typologies of diaspora policies that do not examine the temporal dimension, as they do not analyze diaspora policies as part of historical processes. In line with this thought, my intention during my stay at OSA was to carry out a pilot study for the large scale research project to evaluate the applicability of Grounded Theory on archival sources.

Within the records of Radio Free Europe, the reports, research papers and background analyses of the Hungarian Unit provided the primary sources for my project. I had two major research question to answer:

1. How do the functions and challenges of diasporic activities appear in the reports of RFE?
2. How are diaspora engagement policies reflected in the RFE documents?

Since my intention was to reflect on the viewpoint of RFE concerning the diaspora policies, therefore I focused on the following series of the Hungarian Unit subfond: Subject Files (HU OSA 300-40-1), Subject Files in English (HU OSA 300-40-2), Subject Card Files (HU OSA 300-40-3) and Information Items (Hu OSA 300-40-4).

¹ Alan Gamlen, "Diaspora engagement Policies: What are they and what kinds of states use them?" *Working Paper* 32. University of Oxford, 2006. p.3.

As for the methodological part, I extensively relied on the works of Kathy Charmaz on Grounded Theory², who provides detailed practical guidelines for coding and memo writing. Another publication that I have to highlight in this report is an article entitled “Contextual Positioning” written by Nicholas Ralph, Melanie Birks and Ysanne Chapman.³ That paper helped me in applying the GT method of sociological studies, for a historical research based on archival sources, hence on extant data.

During my research period, first I surveyed the abovementioned series of the Hungarian Unit of RFE and I selected those archival records which documented in any ways the Hungarian state-diaspora relations. After the selection process, I wrote a basic metadata description of the archival material, then I digitized the relevant records, and using an OCR software, I converted the digitized files into Word format, which made it possible later to use a computer-assisted qualitative analysis software for the coding process.

During the coding process, I worked with QDA Miner Lite, which is a basic qualitative data analysis software that provides tools for coding, memoing, assigning variables and for code retrieval as well. From the perspective of functionality, code retrieval is one of the most essential feature of the software, since apart from analyzing code frequency, it can retrieve the coded segments and export them into XLS format. After the retrieval of codes, applying constant comparison between data and data, data and codes, codes and codes, finally between codes and categories, I managed to generate a preliminary code tree for the two research questions.

The first research question focused on the actions and functions of émigrés that were realized as challenges by the Hungarian state. *Figure 1* shows the four major categories of challenges that rooted in émigrés’ activities in Western states and in Hungary. Economic challenges rooted in émigrés’ practice of using the black market for hard currency, in other words avoiding the use of official channels to send remittance to relatives living in Hungary. This practice also influenced the influx of hard currency (US dollars), which was one of the main economic functions of émigrés, applying the perspective of the regime, that was attempted to be exploited by the Hungarian state.

² Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London: SAGE Publications, 2014.

³ Nicholas Ralph, et al. “Contextual Positioning: Using Documents as Extant Data in Grounded Theory Research.” *SAGE Open*. July (2014): 1–7.

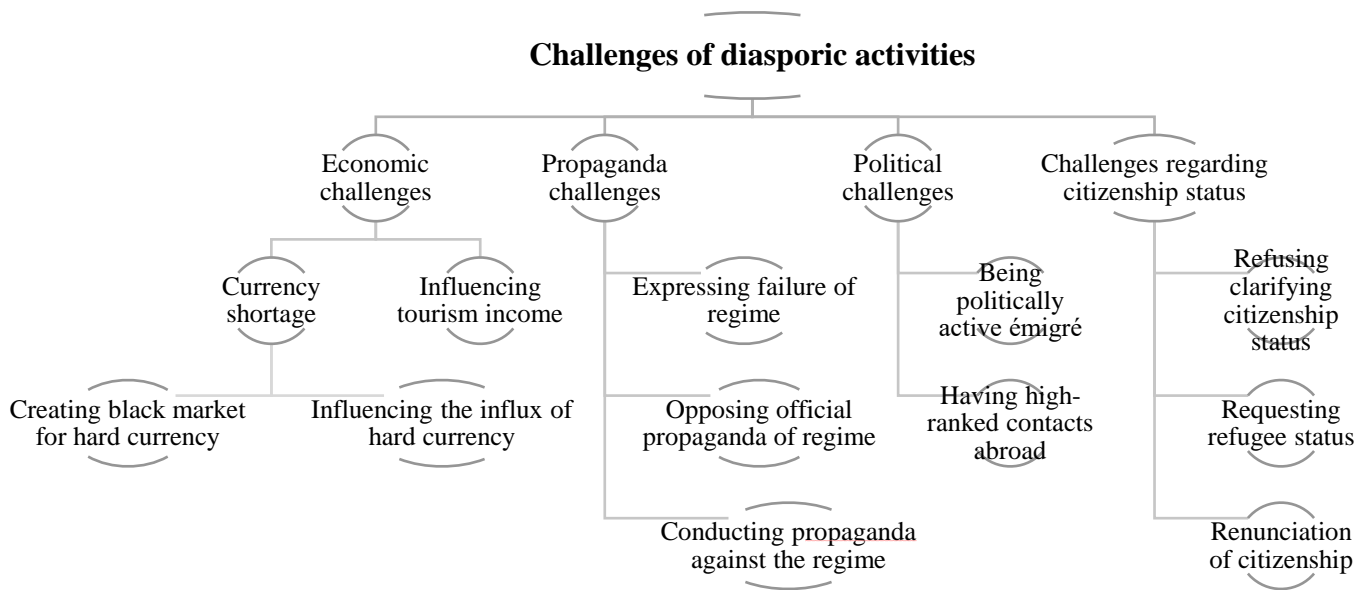


Figure 1: Challenges of diasporic activities

Propaganda challenges and political challenges were realized in connection with active members of the Hungarian émigré community, who had the capacity to challenge the official propaganda of the Hungarian People’s Republic. Interestingly, challenges regarding citizenship status were most frequently mentioned in the records. The records reveal the continuous attempt of the Hungarian state to encourage or force émigrés to clarify their citizenship status, however, many of them were reluctant to do so in fear of losing their refugee status. Therefore, instead of accepting the option of dual citizenship offered by the Hungarian state, many émigrés renounced their Hungarian citizenship. Challenges regarding citizenship status also reflect on the interconnected relationship of diasporic challenges and diaspora policies.

During my research, I coded ten categories of diaspora engagement policies of the Kádár regime documented by RFE. *Table 1* shows the coded diaspora engagement policies with the related codes.

Diaspora engagement policies	Related codes
Redefection policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending appeals towards émigrés • Contacting émigrés • Establishing institutional background for redefection campaign
Institutional building policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing consulate services • Establishing ministerial level agencies • Maintaining World Federation of Hungarians
Investment policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic policies • Knowledge remittance policies

Political incorporation policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship policies • Sanctioning policies • Granting amnesty
Mobility policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing passports • Issuing visas • Denying re-entry to home state • Restricting exit and transit policies
Control policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling contact with émigrés • Monitoring policies • Harassment policies
Propaganda policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcasting “homeland” radio program • Press • Communicating with émigrés
Cultural policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing cultural institutions • Organizing conferences • Organizing summer universities and summer camps • Organizing other cultural activities
Social policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing social evenings • Providing free-of-charge dispensary • Establishing pensioner home for elderly returnees
Symbolic policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing diaspora conferences • Organizing meetings with high-ranked state representatives

Table 1: Diaspora engagement policies of Kádár regime documented by RFE

Due to my short stay at OSA, one of the future research directions that I have to take is the nuanced analysis of the related codes in a form of a publication where detailed examples with the relevant records can be implemented. Comparing *Figure 1* and *Table 1* suggests that there are cause-and-effect relationship between challenges and diasporic activities, which should be also further analyzed to reveal the interactions that forms the mechanisms of state-diaspora relations during the Cold War.

The research also proposed some new research questions for future projects. Firstly, one of the directions that I plan to take is to test the applicability of quantitative research methods on the dataset that I could retrieve from the coding process. Integrating quantitative analysis could extend the scope of the research by utilizing the variables that I assigned to the coded records. Secondly, extending the focus of the research to the satellite states and carrying out a comparative research of diaspora policies is another interesting take on this dataset. The holdings of OSA, especially the background reports of the different units of RFE provide rich materials for such a project.

Archival materials consulted during the research

HU OSA 300-40-1 Subject Files series:

HU OSA 300-40-1:17

HU OSA 300-40-1:18

HU OSA 300-40-1:187

HU OSA 300-40-1:188

HU OSA 300-40-1:256

HU OSA 300-40-1:257

HU OSA 300-40-1:1111

HU OSA 300-40-1:1112

HU OSA 300-40-2 Subject Files in English series:

HU OSA 300-40-2:22

HU OSA 300-40-2:23

HU OSA 300-40-3 Subject Card Files series:

HU OSA 300-40-3:9

HU OSA 300-40-4 Information Items series:

HU OSA 300-40-4:2

HU OSA 300-40-4:19

HU OSA 300-40-4:20

HU OSA 300-40-4:21

Cited secondary sources

Charmaz, Kathy. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London: SAGE Publications, 2014.

Gamlen, Alan J. "Diaspora engagement Policies: What are they and what kinds of states use them?" *Working Paper 32*. University of Oxford, 2006.

Ralph, Nicholas, et al. "Contextual Positioning: Using Documents as Extant Data in Grounded Theory Research." *SAGE Open*. July (2014): 1–7