

Quasi-diaspora and Cross-border Diaspora in the Hungarian-Slovak-Ukrainian Tri-border Region¹

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Abstract: In this paper we analyze the effects of quasi- and cross-border diasporas on migration processes in the Hungarian-Slovak-Ukrainian tri-border region. First we introduce the basic concepts (diaspora, quasi-diaspora and cross-border diaspora), then summarize the features of the tri-border region. The core of the analysis is the tri-border region but we use alternative perspectives (such as other cross-border regions, non-diaspora national minorities along the Eastern border of the EU, etc.) to put our findings into context. In the following chapters we illustrate the proxy characteristics of the tri-border population that define the quasi or cross-border diaspora, and we show how these social phenomena are related to migration processes. We found that in the tri-border region, as a consequence of its particular historical and political embeddedness, quasi-diasporic and regional identities strongly influence the mental map and the migration skills of its inhabitants. Under these conditions borders play an important role in all social processes. However, in case of migration it is also important whether the borders are easy or difficult to cross, what opportunities they offer for arbitrage, how expensive they make mobility, and last but not least to what extent the quasi-diasporic identity and networks play a role to maximize profits and minimize risks in income-earning activities.

Keywords: quasi-diaspora, cross-border diaspora, migration, Hungarian-Slovak-Ukrainian tri-border region

Introduction

In this paper we analyze the role of borders from a special point of view, namely the effects of quasi- and cross-border diasporas on migration processes in the Hungarian-Slovak-Ukrainian tri-border region.

Border studies are nowadays very popular for many reasons. The nation state has obviously failed to disappear, flows of refugees and migrants are reaching regions formerly barely affected, the informalization of various economic processes (from of cross-border shopping to smuggling and trafficking) is amplifying border

¹ The paper is based on the Hungarian country report prepared for the EUBORDERREGIONS project (http://www.euborderregions.eu/files/6_CSR%20HU-UA-SK.pdf).

effects, and when new fences and walls are being constructed to reinforce the robustness of borders.

Along the eastern borders of the EU, however, and in particular in the Carpathian Basin, there exists a rather unique type of border effect that has been engendered by quasi- and cross-border diasporas. The emergence of these closely related phenomena is an unintended outcome of diverse socio-historical processes such as the collapse of various empires in the region in the aftermath of World War I, the protracted nation-building of the newly emerging countries, as well as the re-configuration of borders in the course of post-communist transformations. These trends have multiplied the lengths of borders² and transformed large segments of ethnic majorities into groups of ethnic minorities in neighboring countries.³

The result of these changes is the softening of the so called “container societies” (Wimmer–Glick-Schiller 2012), and the emergence of quasi- and cross-border diasporas. The newborn entities have influenced the diaspora politics of both “host” and “kin” states (Brubaker 2005; Tóth 2012), and by doing so created fertile soil for strong forms of diaspora-politics (Sik 2000; Sik – Tóth 2003), they have also increased the complexity of border effects beyond of long established, unchanging borders which separate different ethnic groups.

In what follows we illustrate the main characteristics of quasi- and cross-border diasporas, combining results from two pieces of comparative research in the tri-border region⁴. First we introduce the basic concepts (diaspora, quasi-diaspora and cross-border diaspora), we then summarize the features of the tri-border region that we consider relevant to our analysis. The core of the analysis is the tri-border region but we will use alternative perspectives (such as other cross-border regions, non-diaspora national minorities along the Eastern border of the EU, etc.). With these comparisons we intend to put our findings into context and to illustrate the limits of our analysis. In chapters three and four, we illustrate the proxy characteristics of the tri-border population that define the quasi or cross-border diaspora, and we show how these social phenomena are related to migration processes.

2 The eastern and southern edges of Europe (from the Baltics to Greece) include 18 countries (comprising 13.8% of the territory and 18% of the population of Europe) but it accounts for 60% of the total length of land borders in Europe. Moreover, only 2.6% of these borders, whose total length is 16 000 km, remained unchanged during the 20th century (the exception is the border along the Danube between Romania and Bulgaria (Illés, n.d.))

3 The incongruent nature of the borders of the political and cultural states became obvious during this period. For example, the number of countries doubled between 1910 and 1933 (21 to 44, respectively), and most of these changes occurred in Eastern and Central Europe (Kolossoff–Trevish 1998).

4 ENRI-East (Interplay of European, National and Regional Identities: nations between states along the new eastern borders of the European Union) and EUBORDERREGIONS. European Regions, EU External Borders and the Immediate Neighbours. Analysing Regional Development Options through Policies and Practices of Cross-Border Co-operation. <http://www.euborderregions.eu/>

Diaspora, quasi-diaspora and cross-border diaspora

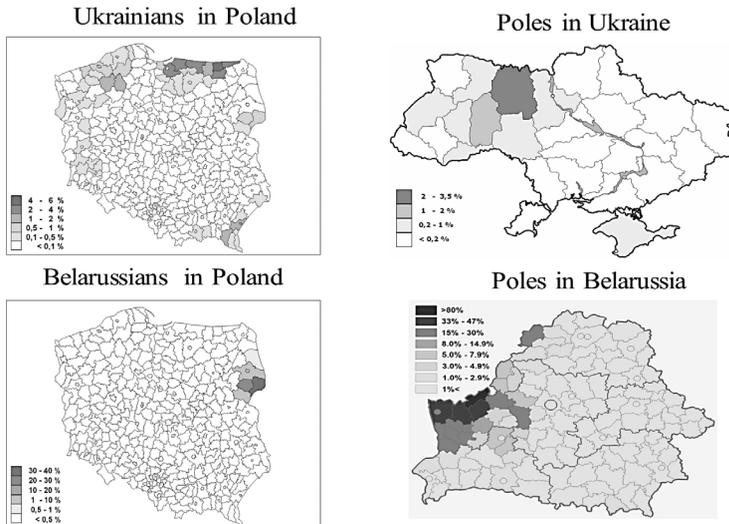
A *diaspora* is a migrant population that has a common “lost Motherland”. The term “diaspora” usually implies forced migration, due to expulsion, slavery, racism, war, etc., and defines itself as an ethnic group based upon its shared identity. This identity is strongly associated with a “lost home land” irrespective of whether it exists or is of mythical nature. In the contemporary global world, however, the modern Diaspora (often called transnational migrant community) is the core of various forms of diaspora politics mainly relate to the political and economic behavior of transnational ethnic diasporas, their relationship with their ethnic homelands (kin state) and their host states (Shain – Wittes 2002).

The term *Quasi-diaspora* refers to national minorities which live in neighboring countries created not by migration but by a shift of the borders. They show diaspora-like traits such as an ambivalent relationship with the host country, and have strong emotional ties to the land of origin (e.g. towards symbols such as the anthem, national flag, mother tongue, etc.). The core of this tension is the fact that these ethnic groups inhabited a territory for hundreds of years, and were forced into a minority position due to the shift of the borders, i.e. a formerly cohesive ethnic group was divided into two territory based segments, one segment remaining a majority (in the kin state) and one becoming a minority (in the host state).

Finally, *cross-border diaspora* refers to the type of quasi-diaspora that is located alongside the two sides of the same border. The main feature of a cross-border diaspora is their being in motion, constantly moving along and across the border/s. Diasporas have strong ties to both the place of origin and also to the place of residence, and when an opportunity arises they can choose to migrate or transact between these two segments, often in a pendulum mode.

Quasi-diasporas and cross-border diasporas cannot be sharply distinguished, and may be simultaneously present at the same time as part of a diaspora. For example Map 1 shows that Ukrainians in Poland form a diaspora (those Ukrainians living in the North and the West migrated there – though not necessarily of their own free will) as well as a cross-border diaspora in the South. Poles in Ukraine, however, form an urban quasi-diaspora. The Poland-Belarus nexus is symmetrical, with both minorities forming cross-border diasporas.

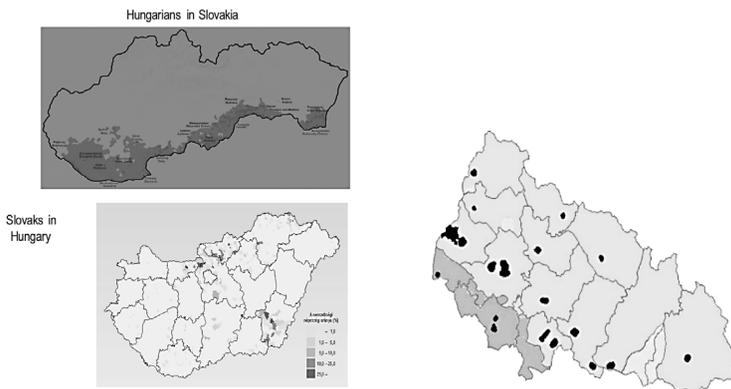
Map 1 *Diaspora, quasi-diaspora and cross-border diaspora in Poland, Ukraine and Belorussia*



Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainians_in_Poland,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poles_in_Ukraine#/media/File:Polish_minority_in_Ukraine_2001.PNG
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belarussian_minority_in_Poland#/media/File:Belarusians_in_Poland_2002.png, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poles_in_Belarus#/media/File:Poles_in_Belarus_share_2009.png

Focusing on the context of the tri-border region (Map 2), while Hungarians in Slovakia and in Transcarpathia (the westernmost and smallest region within Ukraine, very much isolated from the rest of the huge country by the Carpathian Mountains) live in a classic cross-border diaspora situation, Slovaks in Hungary constitute an assimilated diaspora (Örkény – Sik 2011).

Map 2 *Diaspora, quasi-diaspora and cross-border diaspora in Slovakia, Hungary and Transcarpathia*



Sources: Örkény – Sik (2011)
https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Szlov%C3%A1kia#/media/File:Hungarians_in_Slovakia_2.jpg
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarians_in_Ukraine#/media/File:Etnos0.gif

Some characteristics of the tri-border region

The tri-border region is a rare phenomenon in the sense that it comprises four neighboring countries and contains two tri-border regions (the Hungarian–Slovakian–Ukrainian and the Hungarian–Romanian/Ukrainian) (*Map 3*).⁵

Map 3 The three tri-border zones of the region



Source: Sik (2015)

Note: The three circles indicate the tri-border zones, the ellipse shows the approximate borders of our case study, i.e. the Hungarian–Ukrainian border zone containing two tri-border zones.

In less than a century, the tri-border region belonged to several empires and old/new states, starting with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to independent Ukraine following the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁶ In-between, the region saw several temporary shifts of the borders, and a number of war-related state formations (e.g. the short-lived Slovak Republic and the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919) had their borders along and within the region. These processes were the consequence of the squeezing of the region into a buffer zone between various empires.

This historical turmoil had lasting impacts on contemporary structures (transport system, urban development, etc.) and on social processes (the ethnic mix, regional identity, etc.) of the tri-border region, some which turned out to be path

⁵ There is also an additional third tri-border zone (the Polish–Slovak–Ukrainian one) within 100 km.

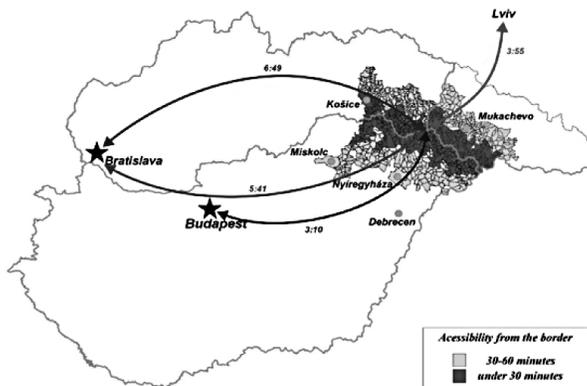
⁶ During the Soviet era the Ukrainian part of the tri-border region was effectively a closed military area. Road and rail transport of raw materials and exports of goods were significant, but the state border was sealed in both directions, preventing locals from making contact (Hajdu et al. 2009). One of the first acts of the Soviet government was to change the width of the rail network from the standard track gauge (1,435 mm) to the broad Russian one (1,520 mm). These changes were implemented in all the territories annexed to the Soviet Union within the framework of Sovietisation measures. Particular attention was paid to controlling (and preventing) contact between local people and residents of the neighboring countries who often had the same ethnic background. In accordance with this goal, only a few crossing points were established and especially the number of checkpoints for international railway passengers was especially limited. The city of Chop became one of only five such checkpoints for international passenger trains along the entire western border of the Soviet Union (Savchuk 2014).

dependent, i.e. they still strongly influence interethnic relations, the extent and mode of operation of the informal economy, policy making, etc.⁷

In 2003, as the accession of Hungary and Slovakia to the EU was drawing near, and in anticipation of the signing of the Schengen Treaty, the previously simple border crossing procedures (so called “small border traffic” procedures between Ukraine and Hungary/Slovakia) had to be discontinued, and an obligatory visa system was introduced, causing a major disruption between Transcarpathia and the rest of the tri-border region. Although “small border traffic” procedures were reinstated in 2007,⁸ since 2005, when Hungary – partly because of financial and budgetary restrictions, and partly because of pressure by the EU – introduced strict customs control processes for goods carried through the border by local residents (with a special focus on petrol, alcohol, and cigarette smuggling), local residents’ income on both sides of the border has greatly diminished. As a consequence, visa requirements and border crossings generally have become a major issue for locals (for politicians, entrepreneurs, and NGO activists, but especially for ordinary citizens), and the border crossing is now prominently featured in the local, regional and national media of Hungary, Slovakia and Ukraine.

Map 4 illustrates the *accessibility* of three major cities (including two capitals: Bratislava and Budapest) and the center of Western Ukraine (Lviv) using half hour and one hour isochrones extending from the core of the tri-border region.

Map 4 Accessibility of the tri-border region



Source: Szalkai (2015)

7 Just as with the on-going Ukrainian–Russian conflict, as foreseen by those who considered CBC (cross-border cooperation) and regionalization “a dangerous effort to reintegrate the ‘Soviet empire’, [and] a manifestation of Russian hegemony in the region” (Zhurzhenko 2004: 2). The explanation being: “Usually, the more recently is allocated a boundary, the less it matches ethnic and linguistic limits. For example, the central part of the Russian – Ukrainian borderland, unlike the north, was settled by Ukrainian and Russian peasants only in the 17th century, after the securitization of these lands by the Russian state. In this historical region, now divided into two countries, the administrative boundaries often changed, depending on the gravitation areas of main cities, not according to ethnic or linguistic factors. There has never been a distinction between Russian and Ukrainian lands which has had an important impact on regional identity and cross-border cooperation (CBC)” (Kolossoff 2012: 19).

8 The bilateral agreement between Hungary and Ukraine on “small border traffic” defines a 50-kilometre-zone on both sides of the border. This regulation covers 382 settlements in Ukraine (Hajdú et al. 2009), and since the overwhelming majority of the Hungarian quasi-diaspora live very close to the border, practically the entire Hungarian community enjoys these benefits.

The map shows the net travel time by car from the core (i.e. from the main border city [Záhony]) of the tri-border region.⁹ Within the tri-border region there is only one major city (Kosice in Slovakia with more than 240 thousand inhabitants in 2011) and one locally important city in Ukraine (Uzhgorod [pop.: cca. 116 000 in 2011]). There are two major cities within the one hour isochrone in Hungary (Miskolc [pop.: cca. 162 000 in 2013] and Nyíregyháza [pop.: cca. 118 000 in 2013]).¹⁰

The accessibility of the tri-border region by train is even worse than it is by car. Among the 119 Hungarian settlements in the Hungarian part of the tri-border region only 28 have train stations. More specifically, only two direct cross border trains connect Hungary and Slovakia, only one connects Hungary and Ukraine, and there is one more connecting Slovakia and Ukraine.^{11 12}

On *Map 2* the Hungarian cross-border diaspora in Slovakia and in Transcarpathia are illustrated¹³. While the 2001 Ukrainian census showed no change in the *ethnic mix* of the population as compared to 1989, in Transcarpathia the proportion of Hungarians—to a large extent due to emigration—has slightly decreased, falling from 12,5% in 1989 to 12.1% in 2001, and has remained unchanged since then. Almost the entire ethnically Hungarian population in Transcarpathia lives in a single cluster of villages along the Hungarian–Ukrainian border.

In Slovakia the proportion of ethnic Hungarians has been continuously decreasing from 10.8% in 1990 to 9.7% in 2001, and to 8.5% in 2011. While the concentration of ethnic Hungarians is very high along the Slovak–Hungarian border, it is slightly less in the tri-border region compared to the Western or Central Slovak–Hungarian border zones (*Map 2*).

As for *GDP per capita*, comparing the regions along the two sides of the eastern borders of the EU we find a significant dividing line between Slovakia and Hungary versus Transcarpathia, the latter's GDP per capita being significantly lower than that of the former two (Kamphuis, 2011).

In terms of the volume of *border crossing* on the eastern-Slovakian, Ukrainian and Hungarian borders we can observe that the number of cars crossing the border started to increase before the transformation of the system (*Figure 1*). While during the post-transformation years the traffic between Slovakia and Hungary stagnated, on the Ukrainian border it oscillated between 1993 and 2009 in reaction to the demand for smuggling as well as the various waves of restrictions applied by state authorities in the two countries.

9 Border crossing time not included.

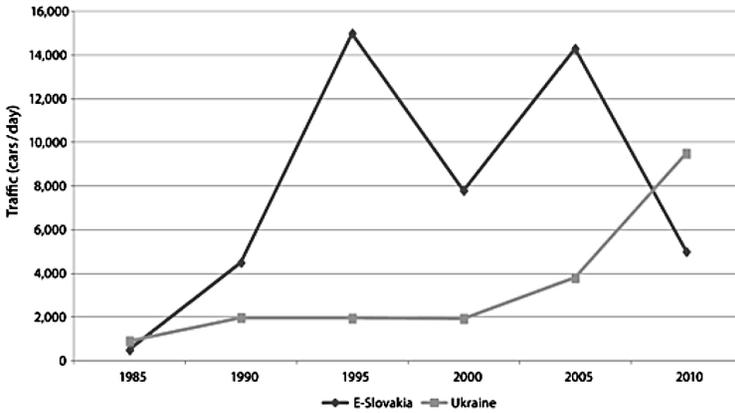
10 According to Ivancsics and Tóth (2012), except for the Sárospatak–Sátoraljaújhely city complex along the Slovak–Hungarian border, there has been no city development on the Hungarian side of the tri-border region for decades, and this situation is not likely to change in the future.

11 Between Záhony (Hungary) and Chop (Ukraine) one must take five short distance train rides (in either directions) only to reach the other side of the border. The same is the case on the Slovak–Ukrainian border, with three local trains per day.

12 As for cost, travelling by train is significantly more expensive than by car. A one-way 2nd class ticket between Budapest and Kosice or Uzhgorod costs the same amount (EUR 20). Within the tri-border region, tickets are significantly more expensive from Miskolc to Chop (EUR 18) than from Nyíregyháza to Chop (EUR 9).

13 In neither case did we find evidence for the existence of symmetrical quasi- or cross border-diasporas.

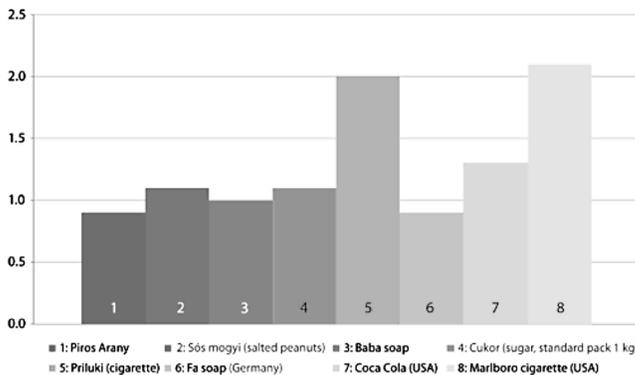
Figure 1 Number of border crossing over the Slovak, Ukrainian and Hungarian borders in the tri-border region, 1985–2009 (the average number of cars per day)



Source: Szalkai (2015)

Comparison of the average price of consumer goods shows that most but not all items are cheaper on the Ukrainian side of the border than on the Hungarian side (Figure 2). In the case of Hungarian domestic products (the first three bar charts) there is hardly any difference between the average price on the two sides of the border, and indeed, two of them are slightly cheaper in Hungary than in Ukraine. Ukrainian domestic products are much more expensive in Hungary than in Ukraine. As for goods produced by multinational firms, while soap is cheaper in Hungary, the other two items are more expensive in Hungary (especially cigarettes).¹⁴

Figure 2 Price differences between Hungarian and Ukrainian domestic products, and goods produced by multinational firms on the two sides of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border (Hungarian average purchasing price divided by Ukrainian average purchasing price)



Source: Sik (2015)

14 Cigarette smuggling also has a long history in the region. In 2004 Priluki was the second most popular cigarette in Hungary despite the fact that this brand was not being legally distributed in Hungary: in the Eastern part of Hungary as much as half of all cigarettes consumed were Priluki. As mentioned earlier, due to recent changes in the Hungarian tobacco retailing system (a lesser number of shops are now allowed to sell tobacco products and prices have also gone up), the consumption of illegal tobacco products has substantially grown.

Ukrainian *prices for petrol* are still about two thirds of what Hungarians must pay, so it is hardly surprising that there is high demand for Ukrainian petrol in Hungary, and the petrol smuggling is flourishing. A good proxy for the high demand for petrol on the Ukrainian side is the fact that while the estimated number of petrol stations along the Ukrainian border area is cca. 100 (petrol stations can be found at approximately 50–100 meters distance from each other on a 5-kilometer-long road from Astei to Bereghovo), on the Hungarian side the nearest petrol station is more than 5 km from the border (Szalai – Sik 2013). In March 2012 new regulations against petrol smuggling came into effect individuals now only allowed to cross the border by car once a week carrying a maximum of one full tank of petrol (plus 10 liters in a jerry can). According to expert interviewees, these regulations have been successful in curbing petrol smuggling in the short term but in the long run are liable “improve the creativity of the inhabitants” and increase the volume of organized smuggling and corruption.

The quasi- and/or cross-border diaspora characteristics of the tri-border region

In the following we describe the existence of the Hungarian cross-border diaspora located along the Slovak and Transcarpathian borders (as well as the lack of a Slovak and Ukrainian cross border diaspora on the Hungarian side) using diverse proxies that theoretically indicate the existence (or the lack of) such phenomena.

Language is crucial to the process of identity management since one’s mother tongue is inherited, and forms an extremely stable part of an individual’s identity. Among other things, one’s mother tongue, as a form of human capital, strongly determines the educational and labor market paths of members of a quasi-diaspora. Being fluent in the quasi-diaspora language increases the probability of the next generation leaving their host state and moving either to their kin-state (in this case, to Hungary) or possibly to other parts of the world via Hungary. The following interview excerpts illustrate the mechanisms underlying this process:

“The basic problem is that our children do not speak Ukrainian (...) My son is a computer wizard but cannot get a job here since he does not speak the language. In 2006 he became a student of the university at Bereghovo but what can he do with a Hungarian diploma? Of course he will move to Hungary” (Juhász, Csatári, and Makara 2010: 21).

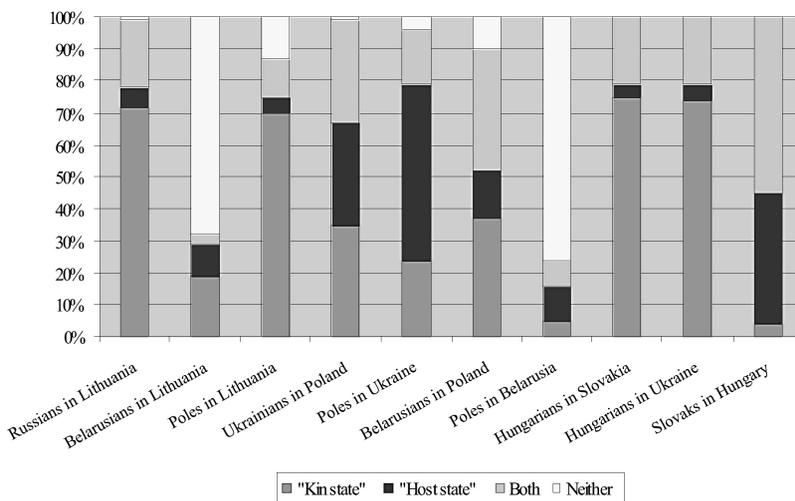
“If in a village 94% of the students speak Hungarian as their mother tongue, even if they learn Ukrainian in school 6-8 hours per week, they will not be able to learn to speak it since they learn it from books, not from everyday communication. Moreover, the idea that “they” should learn our language, and not force us to learn theirs, is deeply ingrained in the Hungarian community” (ibid. 35).

The impact of entering the educational system and the labor market in possession of the quasi-diaspora language as one’s first (and perhaps only) language can be illustrated by the

behavior of Slovak and Ukrainian ethnic Hungarian students in secondary school. These students are almost unanimous about the need to continue their education in Hungary. The children – following their parents' desires/suggestions, as well as through influenced by their peer group – decide early on to move to Hungary. This is partly because they deeply adhere value system of the quasi-diaspora ("they want to go home"), and partly because of the negative attitudes they have towards their environment (poverty, and a sense of a lack of a future in general, but for their minority in particular) (Sik–Szécsi 2015).

Compared to eight other national minorities along the eastern border of the EU, the two Hungarian quasi-diasporas are the most homogeneous in terms of their using of their kin-state language within the family (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Languages used within the family among national minorities along the eastern border of the EU



Source: Sik (2015)

Among all Eastern-European national minorities along the Eastern border of the EU the Hungarian cross border diasporas in Slovakia and Ukraine use their mother tongue (the language of their kin state) most homogenously (followed closely by the Russians and the Poles in Lithuania). Slovaks in Hungary (together with Poles in Belarussia, very likely for very different reasons) use the language of their kin state at home the least.

Compared to the aggregated value of the eight ethnic minorities along the eastern border of the EU (Table 1), the Hungarian cross border diaspora in Slovakia and in Transcarpathia has a higher-than-average *sense of belonging* to their diaspora (column 2), and towards their kin-state (column 1), as well as significantly lower towards their host-state (column 4).

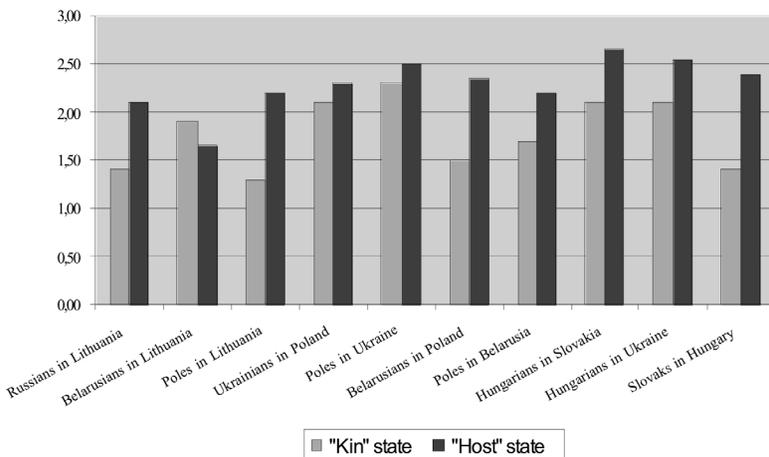
Table 1 Sense of belonging of Hungarians in Slovakia and Transcarpathia, and the eight national minorities along the Eastern border of the EU in general

Sense of belonging to ...						
	kin-state ("Motherland")	diaspora	settlement	host state	Eastern Europe	Europe
Hungarians in Slovakia	-0.0638	0.4416	0.3172	0.0706	-0.5736	-0.2702
Hungarians in Ukraine	-0.0071	0.4079	0.3227	-0.0414	-0.4919	-0.3661
Eight national minorities	-0.2412	0.2692	0.4564	0.3552	-0.5236	-0.3888

Source: The higher the positive (or the negative) value, the stronger (or weaker) is the sense of belonging. Örkény – Székelyi (2011)

Focusing only on the relative level of sense of belonging (closeness) to the kin and the host state (Figure 4) shows that most of the ten national minorities along the eastern border of the EU (with one exception Belarusians in Lithuania) feel closer to the population of their host state than the population of their kin state. The level of sense of belonging to the kin state is high in both Hungarian cross-border diasporas (it is higher only among Ukrainians in Poland, and vice versa), and the difference between the closeness towards the host and the kin state is relatively small in the two Hungarian quasi-diasporas (it is lower only in the two previously described cases and with the Poles in Belorussia).

Figure 4 Sense of belonging to kin and host state among the national minorities located along the eastern border of the EU

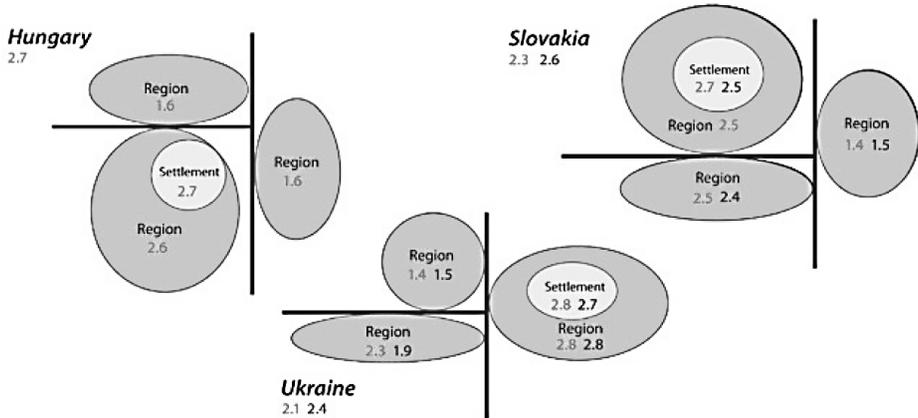


Source: Sik (2015). Closeness between 1 (not at all close) and 4 (very close).

As for regional identity (Figure 5), our research identified the closeness (sense of belonging) of the population located in the three parts of the tri-border region

towards their host state, towards the settlement they live in and towards the three parts of the tri-border region.

Figure 5 The various forms of social distance in the tri-border region by border zone and quasi-diaspora



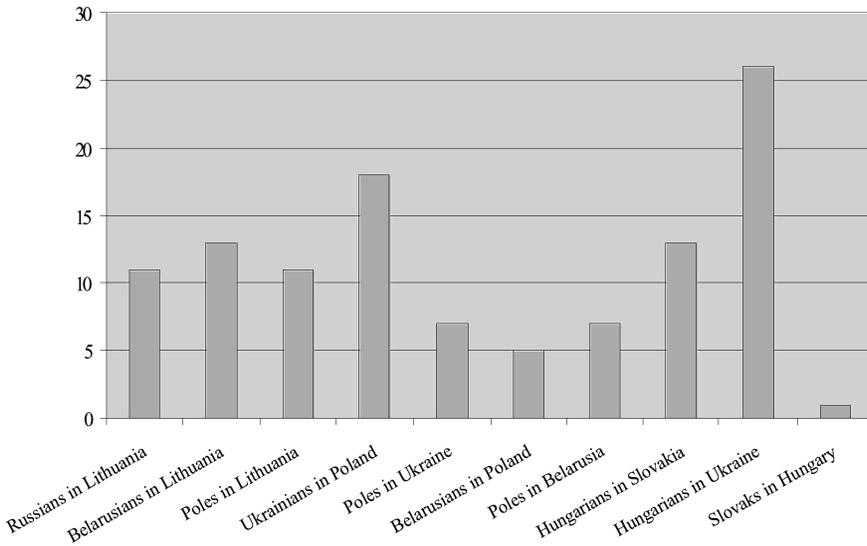
Source: Örkény – Székelyi (2011)

Note: The question was: How close do you feel to the people living in your settlement/region/the other part of the region (separately, with regard to the two other parts of the region)/your country? The numbers: the average social distance between maximum (3) and minimum (1). The color of the numbers: red = Hungarians, green = Slovaks in Slovakia and Ukrainians in Ukraine. The three segments of the chart were chosen for its geographical coherence: upper left Slovakia, lower left Hungary, on the right Transcarpathia.

While Hungarians living in Hungary have equally strong affiliation towards their settlement, region and country, they feel significantly less close their fellow Hungarians in the other two parts of the tri-border region. Slovaks and Ukrainians who live in their parts of the border region value their own and the Hungarian part of the region equally, however they have less regard for each other's part in the region. However, while Hungarians and Slovaks in Slovakia have exactly the same attitudes, Ukrainians in Transcarpathia feel that the Hungarian part of the region is less close to them than their Hungarian fellow residents do. Overall, it appears that the Hungarian part of the tri-border region is the core of regional identity for all the inhabitants except for the Ukrainians in Transcarpathia.

We assume that the more prevalent the *discrimination experience* of an ethnic minority is, the stronger the quasi-diaspora identity will be. Figure 6 shows that, compared to other minorities living along the eastern border of the EU, discrimination experience is the highest among Hungarians in Ukraine, and is slightly above average in Slovakia.

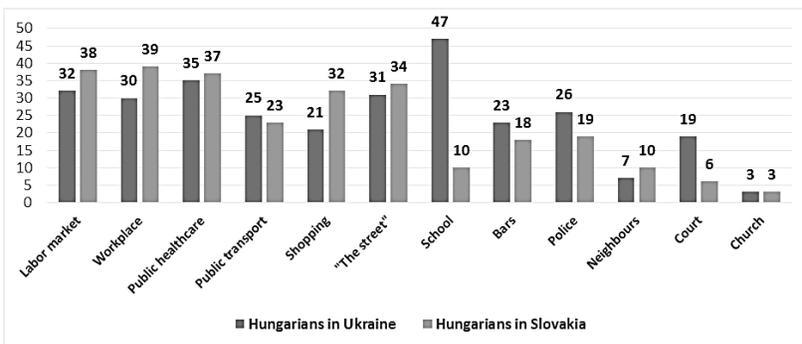
Figure 6 Prevalence of discrimination experience among national minorities along the eastern border of the EU (%)



Source: Sik (2015)

The Slovakia and Ukrainian cross-border diasporas in the tri-border region experience discrimination in a somewhat different institutional context (Figure 7). While in both cases the social milieus in which the highest rate of ethnic discrimination are in the course of job hunting, the workplace and the healthcare system, in Transcarpathia the educational system is the main cause for discrimination, while in Slovakia discrimination is often experienced in a non-institutional milieu (shops and streets).

Figure 7 Location (social milieu) of experience of ethnic discrimination in the Hungarian cross-border diaspora in Slovakia and Ukraine (% of those who have felt discriminated against for being Hungarian).



Source: Sik (2015)

Quasi- and cross-border diaspora and migration

Short term labor migration and emigration potential are significantly lower on the Hungarian side of the tri-border region than in the Slovak or Transcarpathian parts (*Table 2*).

Table 2 Migration potential in the border region by border zone and ethnicity (%)

	Hungarian-Slovak border			Hungarian-Ukrainian border			Total
	Hungarians	Hungarians in Slovakia	Slovaks	Hungarians	Hungarians in Ukraine	Ukrainians	
For some weeks, months	4	26	25	4	18	14	13
For some years	11	12	8	4	11	5	9
Emigration	4	6	9	1	13	8	6
N	314	187	107	287	199	100	1194

Source: Koltai – Sik (2012)

While in the case of Slovakia migration potential is rather similar for both the majority and the Hungarian cross-border diaspora, in Transcarpathia the level of all three types of migration potential is significantly higher in the Hungarian cross border diaspora than among the majority.

As far as the direction of migration potential is concerned (*Table 3*), Hungarian citizens orient themselves towards Germany, Slovaks towards all major destination countries in the region, and Ukrainians towards “the rest of the World”. From our point of view the important conclusion is that while the mental map of the Hungarian cross-border diaspora in Slovakia is similar to that of the majority (except for having a weak tie with Hungary), the Hungarians in Transcarpathia have a very strong quasi-diasporic attachment towards the Hungarian labor market.

Table 3 Direction of migration potential in the border region by border zone and ethnicity (%)

	Hungarians	Hungarians in Slovakia	Slovaks	Hungarians in Ukraine	Ukrainians
Germany	34	18	15	13	17
Austria	10	24	23	3	0
U.K.	11	13	25	0	6
Italy Spain	13	5	23	15	0
Hungary	x	14	0	54	14
Other	32	26	14	15	63
Total	100	100	100	100	100
N	79	120	53	78	34

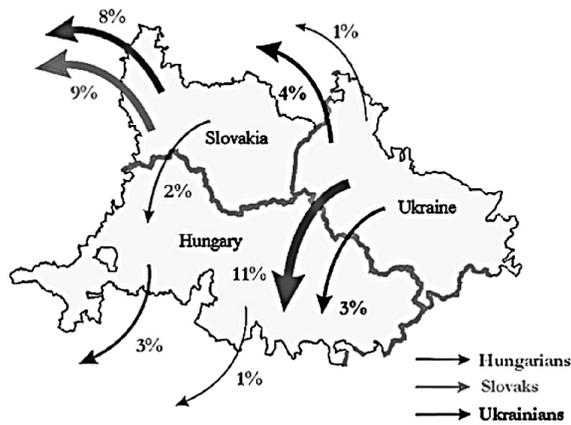
Source: Sik (2015)

Notes: Cumulative data of three responses. Responses from Ukrainians on the Ukrainian side of the Hu/Ua border were omitted due to small sample size; x = impossible alternative.

The actual prevalence of migration in 2011 was significantly lower for those living in the Hungarian part of the tri-border region (1-4%) than for those living in the Slovak or in the Transcarpathian part of the region (12-10% and 11-8% respectively), in both cases there was a small difference between ethnic Hungarians and the majority, the latter being less active.

With regards to the direction of labor migration within the tri-border region, Hungary serves as the primary destination country for the Transcarpathian Hungarians (*Map 5*). This is, however, not the case with the Slovaks: both the majority and the Hungarian quasi-diaspora are more inclined to look for work outside of the tri-border region.

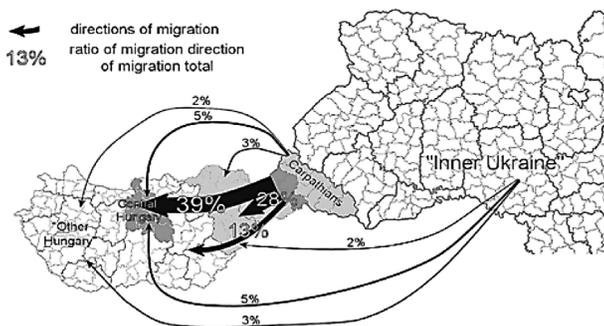
Map 5 Directions of labor migration by border zone and ethnicity (%)



Source: Koltai – Sik (2012)

80% of the Hungarians from Ukraine who are working in Hungary originate from the cross-border diaspora, and more than every third one is employed in Budapest, and almost a third of them are working on the Hungarian side of the tri-border region (*Map 6*).

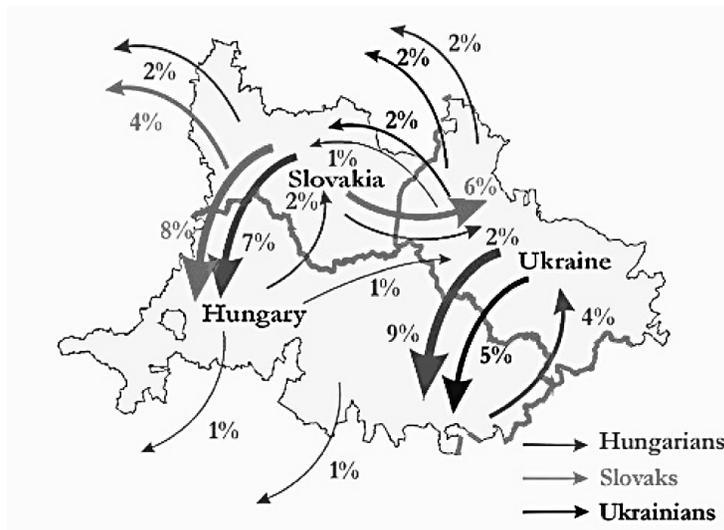
Map 6 The origin and destination of Ukrainians in Hungary in 2008



Source: Karácsony–Kincses (2012)

As for quasi entrepreneurial activity (cross border shopping, petty smuggling, etc.) in the tri-border region, from the Hungarian side of the border region hardly anyone visited other parts of the border in 2011 (the largest proportion 4% went to Transcarpathia). Almost 10% of those living in the Slovak part of the tri-border region (irrespective of ethnicity, i.e. both majority Slovaks and quasi-diaspora Hungarians) did some shopping and/or were engaged in some “business” on the Hungarian part of the tri-border region, and Slovaks were rather active in Transcarpathia as well. As for those living in Transcarpathia, twice as many people were involved in quasi-entrepreneurial activity from the Hungarian cross-border diaspora compared to the Ukrainian majority (*Map 7*).

Map 7 Direction of quasi-entrepreneurial activity in the tri-border region by border zone and ethnicity (%)



Source: Koltai – Sik (2012)

Summary

In this paper the main focus of the analysis was the effects of quasi- and cross-border diasporas on migration processes in the Hungarian-Slovakian-Ukrainian tri-border region.

A cross-border diaspora is a specific part of a quasi-diaspora because its members are located close to the border. Cross-border diasporas are in constant motion—usually on both sides of the border – mostly because of income-earning purposes. This mobility may mean that the whole future of a community is based on such cross-border pendulum-like motion which creates a state of permanent fluidity

(Feischmidt–Zakariás 2010). This situation is clearly illustrated by the diaspora identity of the Hungarians living in Ukraine, and its impact on migration in the Hungarian-Slovak-Ukrainian tri-border region.

Not surprisingly, in the tri-border region, as a consequence of its particular historical and political embeddedness, quasi-diasporic and regional identities strongly influence the mental map and the migration skills of its inhabitants.

Under these conditions borders play an important role in all social processes. However, in case of migration it is also important whether the borders are easy or difficult to cross, what opportunities they offer for arbitrage, how expensive they make mobility, and last but not least to what extent the quasi-diasporic identity and networks play a role to maximize profits and minimize risks in income-earning activities.

The Hungarian cross border diaspora in Slovakia and in Transcarpathia have a strong sense of belonging to their diaspora and to their kin-state but significantly less to their host-state. The level of sense belonging to the kin state is high in both Hungarian cross-border diasporas, moreover the difference between the closeness towards the host and the kin state is relatively small in the two Hungarian quasi-diasporas.

However, the quasi-diasporic identity is mainly used as capital in cross-border migration by the Transcarpathian Hungarians and plays only a very limited role among Hungarians in Slovakia because of the differences in border crossing and economic conditions between the quasi-diaspora and the kin state. The prevalence of discrimination also plays an important role on migration and the Slovakian and Ukrainian cross border diasporas experience discrimination in the same way (in both cases the social milieus with the highest rate of ethnic discrimination are in the course of job hunting) but somehow in different institutional context as well: in Slovakia the workplace and the healthcare system, in Transcarpathia the educational system is the main cause for discrimination, and in Slovakia often non-institutional milieus (shops and streets) are the places of discrimination.

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