

No. 2 (25), February 2021

## Three types of diasporas from Poland, Hungary and Lithuania?

The enlargement of the European Union and ensuing migrations have brought new challenges and opportunities for the diaspora policies of the source countries. In this issue of CMR Spotlight, Magdalena Lesińska and Anghela Popyk present the assumptions of their new research project on [“Diaspora policy in the context of post-accession migration. Comparative analysis of Poland, Lithuania and Hungary”](#). They propose to analyse diasporas from each country as three distinct groups: ‘old’ diasporas, kin-minorities, and ‘post-accession’ diasporas. Each should be looked at in three overlapping dimensions: narrative, structural, and practical.



© Source: Wikipedia, Scooter20 - from en:Image:MagyarsOutsideHungary.png which was based on the Distribution of ethnic-Hungarians in Central and Southeastern Europe according to Sebők László.[1], CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6836739>



# A three-dimensional analysis of diaspora policy

Magdalena Lesińska, Anzhela Popyk

---

## The concept of diaspora

Diaspora is commonly understood as a group of people who live outside their home country (state of origin) as a result of various reasons: voluntary or forced emigration (e.g., forced deportation, political persecutions), finding themselves abroad due to a change of state borders, or being born abroad, but with their identity shaped by relation to the country. Thus, diaspora can be represented through various groups that differ in the complexity and fluidity of migration flows or historical and political events. For this reason, the analysis of diaspora and diaspora policy has become a real challenge for researchers.

## Types of diaspora in CEE countries (Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary)

The main objective of the project, entitled *“Diaspora policy in the context of post-accession migration. Comparative analysis of Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary”* (Research Project No. 2018/31/B/HS5/00913, funded by the National Science Centre, Poland), is to conduct a comparative analysis of the **transformation of diaspora policies in the case of Poland, Hungary and Lithuania** from the political transition (1989/1991) to the present, with particular attention to the period after the accession of these countries to the EU

in 2004. The planned study contains the analysis of the official and non-official documents of the states’ diaspora policies, and the development of patterns of the policies implemented towards chosen diasporic groups. Additionally, the aim of the project is to develop and test the three-dimension analytical model (see below) of diaspora policy analysis.

The main **research questions** of the project are:

- What are the official state’s narrative, legal regulations, institutional infrastructure, programs, and strategies addressed to the diaspora, and how have they changed in time (since the democratic transition in 1989/1990 until today)?;
- How have the home states responded to the massive emigration after 2004, and what kind of state policy has been addressed to the “post-accession” diaspora?;
- What kind of diaspora policy has been addressed to the kin-minorities? How has it changed along with the growing diversity of the diasporic population, related to post-accession emigration?;
- How does the diaspora influence the political system of the country of origin? What is the place of the diaspora in the

foreign policy discourse? And how does it impact the relations between the country of origin and the country of settlement?

Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania are undergoing similar political and socio-economical processes and, over the last centuries, have also experienced significant territorial changes and parallel migratory processes. **All three countries are migrant sending-states and ethnic kin-states with a broadly dispersed diaspora**, due to mass outflows on the one hand, and border changes on the other. Although the size of the diaspora is difficult to measure due to the lack of consistent data sources, there are some estimations. They should be, however, treated with some distance due to objective difficulties in verifying its actual size on the one hand, and the common way of perceiving the "grand" national community, of which diaspora is a part, on the other. According to the [Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs \(2015\)](#), there are 15-20 million Poles and people of Polish origin worldwide, while the Lithuanian diaspora numbers about 1.3 million. The last seems to be a small number, but not when we take into account that Lithuania's total population is 2.9 million ([Gudelis, Klimavičiūtė 2016](#)). The Hungarian diaspora numbers about 6 million ethnic Hungarians together with their descendants, 3 million of whom live in the Carpathian Basin ([National Knowledge](#), n.d.). In the case of these countries, the diaspora can be characterized as consisting of three main groups:

- **'old' diaspora:** a result of numerous outflows dating back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, followed by emigration, mostly to

the USA and Western Europe, induced by political oppressions and slow economic development of the countries of origin.

- **kin-minorities:** in all three states, numerous kin-minorities arose due to groundbreaking historical events and border changes over the 20<sup>th</sup> century (at the end of World War I and II, and the collapse of the USSR). According to official estimates, there are around one million people of Polish origin inhabit neighbouring states, while the population of ethnic Hungarians living in bordering countries exceeds 2-3 million ([Lesińska, Héjji 2021](#)).
- **'post-accession' diaspora:** post-2004 emigration to other EU countries. According to the [United Nations \(2019\)](#), since 2004, the number of long-term Polish emigrants (those who stayed abroad for more than 3 months) worldwide grew twice as large, reaching 2.5 million (thus, the post-accession emigration stock was 6,5 % of the national population) in 2019, about 76 % of whom resided in the EU. Lithuanian emigration data, similarly to Polish, indicate that the number of migrants worldwide increased twofold from 2004 to 2019, reaching about 610 thousand, of which 89% resided in EU countries ([United Nations, 2019](#)). However, the major distinction is the number of emigrants as a percentage of the national population, which, in 2019, rose to 20%.

Consequently, Poland is the country with the biggest net emigration in the whole EU, whereas Lithuania has the biggest net emigration per 1000 population ([OECD 2015](#)). In the case of Hungary, the largest outflow took place a few years after EU accession,

concurrently with the economic crisis (since 2007), and the access to the labour market in Germany and Austria, in 2011. Hence, by 2019, the stock of Hungarian emigrants worldwide rose to 630 thousand (which constitutes 5% of Hungary’s population). This includes 460 thousand Hungarian migrants residing in the EU, with the ‘post-accession’ long-term migrants accounting for about 200 thousand ([United Nations, 2019](#)).

### Researching the diaspora policy

The analytical approach adopted in the project is based on the assumption that the diaspora policy is fluid and designed as a diversified set of solutions addressed to different diasporic groups, rather than a fixed and unitary policy. Thus, it should be analyzed as a **multi-dimensional, multi-target, and multi-item policy** projected by a state which faces challenges related to mass emigration, a growing diversity of the diasporic population, and dynamic inter-state relations (between the country of origin and countries of diaspora settlement). Consequently, the empirical analysis of diaspora policy planned in the project will cover **three overlapping dimensions**:

- **Narrative dimension:** the political discourse regarding diaspora/emigration constructed by state institutions (e.g., government, parliament) and political parties, including official documents, written and oral statements made by representatives of government and administration, as well as rhetoric and symbolic gestures directed to the diaspora.
- **Structural dimension:** legal, political, and institutional opportunity structures

dedicated to the diaspora, including legal framework and institutional apparatus within the state of origin system (a diaspora unit or dedicated ministry, expanded consular infrastructure), a network of state and non-governmental organizations (national and international) cooperating with the diaspora, representation channels, and consultative bodies.

- 3) **Practical dimension:** cooperation and support programs addressed to the diaspora, strategies, and practices undertaken by the state, implemented especially in such areas as education in the national language, promotion of national culture, supporting diaspora-oriented media services (broadcast), and diaspora organizations.

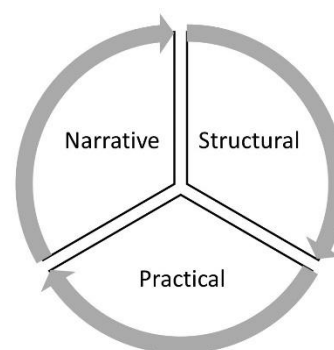


Fig 1. The three-dimensional analytical model of diaspora policy.

The Table 1 below presents examples of policy areas related to diaspora and applies the three-dimension analytical model which will be developed further during the project. It will be a starting point to test a comprehensive model of a state’s diaspora policy analysis presented above.

	<b>Narrative</b> (normative basis of diaspora policy )	<b>Structural</b> (legal and institutional framework)	<b>Practical</b> (implemented programs and activities)
<b>'Old' diaspora</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• symbolic nation building processes over the borders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• political rights (external voting)</li> <li>• dual nationality</li> <li>• public diplomacy</li> <li>• property rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school systems/curricula abroad and promotion of education in national language</li> <li>• programs promoting national language and culture abroad</li> <li>• means of cooperation with diaspora organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Kin- minorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• moral duties of the state of origin to provide kin-minorities with care to compensate decades of exile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries related to the members of national minorities status and rights</li> <li>• special benefits based on ethnic origins ("kin-state laws"), e.g. preferential access to homeland territory and naturalization</li> <li>• "ethnic" identity card</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school systems/curricula abroad and means of promotion of education in national language</li> <li>• established cross-border networks</li> <li>• programs aimed to support national minorities organizations, and support of national culture abroad</li> </ul>
<b>'Post-accession' diaspora</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emigration as a right (freedom of movement)</li> <li>• emigration and diaspora as part of the interstate relations and foreign policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consular service network and consultative bodies</li> <li>• protection of social and labour rights of emigrants working abroad</li> <li>• regulations on avoiding double taxation</li> <li>• the procedures of naturalization for children born abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitating returns</li> <li>• economic cooperation between the diasporas and kin-states</li> <li>• the support means of the diaspora organizations</li> <li>• facilitating the flow of financial remittances</li> <li>• promotion of national language and culture among kin-minorities</li> </ul>

**Funding:**

National Science Centre, Poland, grant number 2018/31/B/HS5/00913

More about the project:

<http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/projects/diaspora-policy-in-the-context-of-post-accession-migration-comparative-analysis-of-poland-lithuania-and-hungary/>



#### Magdalena Lesińska

Assistant Professor in Centre of Migration Research at University of Warsaw (CMR UW). She was awarded a PhD in Political Science in 2006 at Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wrocław. Her PhD thesis was devoted to the comparative analysis of political inclusion of immigrants in Western European countries. She completed MA Program in Nationalism Studies in Central European University in Budapest (2002) and MA Program in Political Science in University of Wrocław (2001). In 2006-2008 she worked as an Assistant Professor at University of Wrocław in the Department of European Studies. Since 2008, she has been employed in the CMR UW, in 2008-2013 she performed duties of a Deputy Director in the CMR UW. Her present research area includes migration policy at state and EU level, citizenship and naturalization, political and public participation of immigrants, political activities of Poles living abroad, state policy towards Polish diaspora.



#### Anzhela Popyk

Researcher in the scientific project "Diaspora policy in the context of post-accession migration. Comparative analysis of Poland, Lithuania and Hungary", realized at the Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw. Anzhela graduated from English Philology in SWPS, Warsaw. Since 2017 has been a doctoral student at the University SWPS. She has been writing her thesis entitled "The Role of Socialization Agents in Transnational Transitions and Formation of Sense of Belonging Among Migrant Children in Poland". She is also a researcher at the Youth Research Center (SWPS). Her research interests are – migration studies, childhood studies, multilingualism and multiculturalism among both adults and children, ethnic minorities and diaspora policy, migration policy.

---

Keywords:

diaspora policy / Poland / Lithuania / Hungary / multi-dimensional approach

---

---

Suggested citation: Lesińska M., Popyk A., 2021. *A three-dimensional analysis of diaspora policy*. CMR Spotlight, 2(25).

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions or views of the CMR or its members.

Editors of CMR Spotlight: Michał Nowosielski, Dominika Pszczółkowska

---

