

Waterbury, Myra A. *Between State and Nation: Diaspora Politics and Kin-State Nationalism in Hungary*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Pp 221.

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In her examination of kin-state nationalism, the political engagement of populations beyond a state's borders on the basis of ethnic similarity, Myra A. Waterbury asks, "What drives states to engage their ethnic diasporas across the border? Why do some states expend economic and diplomatic capital, risk interstate tension, and open themselves to new and unpredictable claims on its resources by extending special rights, benefits, and the protection of its institutions to residents and citizens of other states?" (3) Utilizing post-communist Hungary as the primary case-study, Waterbury concludes that the conventional explanatory factor – the resurgence of ethnic nationalism post-1989 – does not fully explain Hungary's increased, yet at times ambivalent, involvement with its ethnic diaspora in Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Serbia over the past two and a half decades. Instead, she posits that "the interests and perceptions of political elites" are behind the expansion of Hungary's kin-state policies. (6) The desire of political elites, most prominently (but not exclusively) on the political Right, to gain access to a wide array of resources in the diaspora community, ranging from labor markets to political networks to nation-building symbolism, propels kin-state nationalism. (145)

Between State and Nation gives a chronological narrative of Hungary's kin-state policies since the Treaty of Trianon separated around three million ethnic Hungarians in Central Europe from the Hungarian state. Waterbury briefly treats the interwar and post-war periods, establishing precedent for post-1989 diaspora policies in the Horthy era. She challenges the notion that kin-state nationalism lost its appeal after World War II, noting that "the idea of the larger transborder nation never lost its symbolic importance as a source of governing legitimacy" even in the Stalinist period. (39) In the 1970s and '80s, dissident intellectuals increasingly took on Hungarian diaspora issues as a way to criticize the regime, and reform communists followed suit hoping to bolster flagging legitimacy.

Waterbury explores kin-state nationalism in the period of nascent multi-party democracy in Hungary, deftly comparing the kin-state policies of two center-right parties, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and the Federation of Young Democrats (Fidesz). The MDF, the largest party in Hungary's first post-communist government, touted itself as a champion of ethnic Hungarians abroad but its aggressive foreign policy, overreliance on nationalist symbolism, and failure to tackle other domestic issues precipitated a backlash against the party. The MDF lost the 1994 parliamentary election to a left-wing coalition. Although tempered by emerging democratic processes, kin-state nationalism did not disappear from Hungary's political scene. Fidesz, previously a small liberal party, took on the banner of diaspora politics and became the leading center-right party in Hungary. Waterbury argues that Fidesz succeeded where the MDF failed by making diaspora politics into a proxy issue domestically and by effectively networking with Hungarian minority leaders abroad.

One of *Between State and Nation*'s greatest strengths is Waterbury's elucidation of the central tension surrounding European kin-state nationalism in the twenty-first century: whereas committed kin-state nationalists like Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán envision "an EU organized around a Europe of cultural and linguistic regions" (94) instead of political borders,

Brussels is committed to maintaining a more traditional political organization “based on sovereignty and citizenship.” (113) As the main external actor influencing Hungarian policy, Waterbury argues that EU accession provoked greater involvement with diaspora populations by the Hungarian government, but eventually moderated it. She discusses the formulation of the 2002 Status Law, which was to give ethnic Hungarians in neighboring states special rights within Hungary, as a response to fears that EU accession would create a barrier between Hungary and its diaspora. The law’s eventual failure came on the heels of criticism internationally by EU officials and neighboring states and domestically by Fidesz’s main political opponent, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP).

Waterbury presents a nuanced analysis of Hungarian kin-state nationalism by discussing not only the right-wing kin-state policies of the MDF and Fidesz, but those of the Left as well. After MSZP’s surprise victory in 2002, the new government did not abandon diaspora politics as one might assume, instead undertaking a major restructuring of state policy and diaspora institutions. At least for a time, MSZP was able to present a viable alternative to Fidesz’s kin-state policies by linking diaspora engagement with regional economic development. Waterbury concludes her analysis by putting the Hungarian case into a regional context. She briefly discusses other instances of kin-state nationalism in East-Central Europe, focusing on Polish, Russian, and Romanian examples, which have all dabbled in different forms of cross-border citizenship or extraterritorial rights for members of the ethnic nation.

Between State and Nation contributes to the growing literature on ethnic minorities and kin-state nationalism by authors like Rogers Brubaker (*Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, New York, 1996) and Zsuzsa Csergő (*Talk of the Nation: Language and Conflict in Romania and Slovakia*, Ithaca, N.Y., 2007). It effectively problematizes the still-unsettled relationship between nationhood and citizenship in East-Central Europe that is sure to be a defining issue for years to come. It does leave open several avenues for future research, however. Brubaker reminds us that there is a “dynamic interdependence” between kin-states, diaspora populations, and their states of residence. (*Nationalism Reframed*, 58) Waterbury treats only a single aspect of this triangular network, obscuring some of the external causes and effects of Hungarian policy. The reaction of neighboring governments to Hungarian kin-state policies is well-trod territory, but reception of these policies among the Hungarian diaspora is decidedly less so. While she discusses various strategies for engagement with diaspora groups (Fidesz’s foundations and cross-border client networks, MSZP’s centralized Government Office of Hungarians Abroad), Waterbury gives little indication of how these institutions functioned on the ground. Also, given the conclusion that kin-state nationalism is due to elites’ desire for resources above any other factor, it would be informative to look at Hungary’s policies toward ethnic Hungarians in Western Europe and the United States, who represent another potential source of political, cultural, and economic capital. These minor points aside, *Between State and Nation* is a highly informative read for those eager to know more about Hungarian diaspora politics.