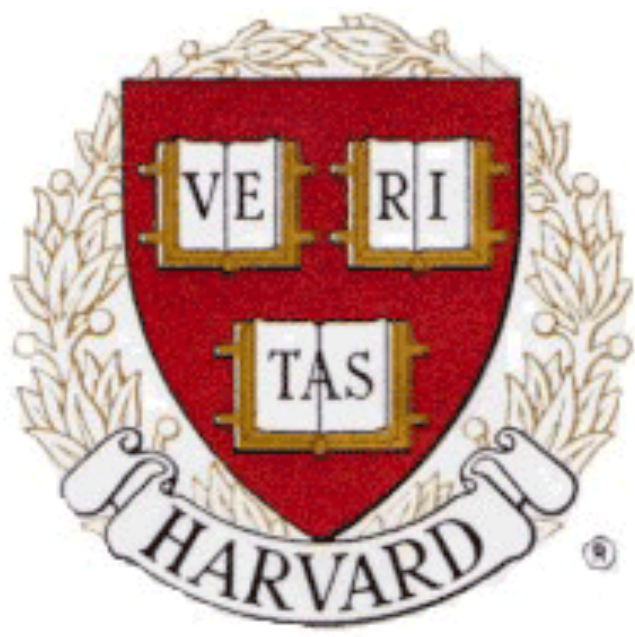




Transnational Migration and Its Impact on Political Socialization, Voting and the State-Citizen Relationship

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Abstract

Migration recalibrates the state-citizen relationship. Around the world, new democracies are experiencing high levels of transnational mobility, as their citizens engage in temporary or circular migration. Migrants leave for pragmatic reasons (generally, to work or study abroad), but do not intend to settle down in the receiving country. They structure their lives in spaces that transcend nation-state boundaries, becoming transnational citizens, pragmatic market actors, not emigrants who leave the homeland for good.

This project studies how migration affects individual worldviews, voting, political systems (state institutions and policies) and campaigns. In sending regions, due to their high visibility, newly acquired resources and rapid ascent in social hierarchies, circular migrants and temporary returnees have become agents of economic, social, political and cultural change. But what KIND of change are we witnessing? Specifically, is migration good or bad for democracy? Focusing on the case of free movement of people in the European Union, I analyze the triple transformation of individuals, communities and states. My cases are Poland and Romania (high migration), and Hungary and Bulgaria (low migration).

Questions

How does transnational mobility influence the worldviews, political behaviors and orientations of transnational work migrants and their communities of origin?

Do migrants and communities with high levels of migration become more politically radical or nationalist; more nostalgic towards the communist past; or more cosmopolitan and pro-democracy? Do migrants develop forms of long-distance nationalism or do they become more cosmopolitan? Do they emancipate themselves from state influence or do they want a stronger state presence in their lives?

How does transnational migration influence voting in countries with high levels of migration and those with low levels of migration?



Migrant & non-migrant houses in Maramures, Romania.

Due to their high visibility, newly acquired resources and rapid ascent in social hierarchies, transnational migrants have become agents of economic, social, political and cultural change.



Methods

The analysis unfolds at three levels: individuals, communities and states. I combine quantitative data (election results) with qualitative methods (in-depth interviews, semi-structured questionnaires, policy analyses and process tracing) to test the hypotheses. I compare the worldviews of migrants and non-migrants, electoral preferences in communities with high versus low levels of migration, and post-communist countries with high levels of transnational migration (Poland and Romania) with states where citizens are relatively sedentary (Hungary and Bulgaria). **For the case of Romania**, I compare political preferences at county level as expressed by voting in the first round of presidential elections since 1996. 1996 serves as the pre-treatment year. The post-treatment (TN migration) period is in the 2000s, when Romania became a credible EU candidate and, later, EU member-state.



In post-communist Romania, transnational migration emancipates citizens from their previous dependence on the state. Migrants unlearn helplessness and become cosmopolitan. Unsurprisingly local authorities fail to keep up with the pace of transformation that migration imposes.



Results: Citizens of the Market

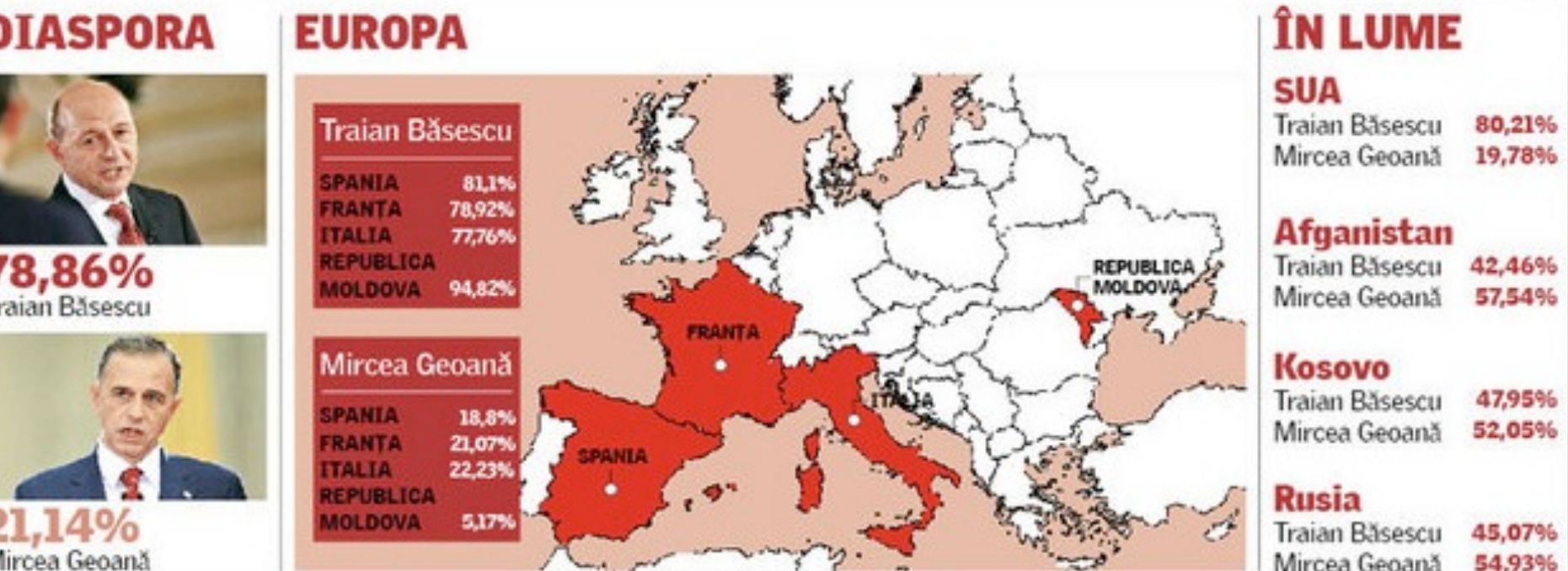
Transnational migrants are pragmatic, cosmopolitan, yet attached to their home. They trust the EU more than politicians at home. They distrust co-nationals.

They tend to favor center-right parties and strongly dislike communist successor parties. None of the migrants I interviewed developed long-distance nationalism.

Migrants prefer minimalist states. Through migration, these individuals engage in a reengineering of the self, becoming emancipated EU-market actors.



Romanian President Traian Basescu starts his campaign by visiting Romanian migrants in Spain (October 2008).



It obviously paid off...

Results: Transnational State-Building

Method: Process tracing and policy analysis in Poland and Romania

Migrant-sending states use transnational citizens as agents of local and regional development. This arrangement is particularly advantageous in the broader context of governments implementing reforms that downsize the state as part of the transition to free-market economy.

In the early stages of migration, states **facilitate the citizens' exit – the unambitious and escapable state (unidirectional mobility)**. Once migratory networks have been established and consolidated (**the EU factor**), states invest in **encouraging the migrants' loyalty – the magnet state (bidirectional flows)**. Finally, states create institutional channels to **enhance the migrant voice and their representation – the communicative state (transnational state-building)**.

ELECTION RESULTS PRIOR TO TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION – Presidential Elections 1996
PSD = FORMER COMMUNIST PARTY; DEM = DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION PARTY/COALITIONS; NAT = NATIONALIST RADICAL PARTY

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	PSDpet	PSDpet	DEMpet	DEMpet	NATpet	NATpet
Unemployment rate	0.261 (1.53)	0.227 (1.39)	-0.097 (-0.69)	-0.104 (-0.83)	0.016 (0.10)	0.024 (0.17)
Urbanization rate	-0.092 (-0.66)	-0.080 (-0.57)	0.007 (0.05)	0.025 (0.16)	0.279 (1.38)	0.288 (1.60)
Emigration rate	-0.145 (-0.73)	0.060 (0.40)	0.093 (0.60)			
Housing permits	0.301 (1.99)		-0.030 (-0.19)		-0.128 (-0.96)	
N	40	40	40	40	40	40

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses. * < 0.05, ** < 0.01, *** < 0.001. Standard errors have been corrected for clustering at the county level.

ELECTION RESULTS IN EARLY STAGES OF TRANSNATIONALISM – Presidential Elections (2000)
PSD = FORMER COMMUNIST PARTY; DEM = DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION PARTY/COALITIONS; NAT = NATIONALIST RADICAL PARTY

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	PSDpet	PSDpet	DEMpet	DEMpet	NATpet	NATpet
Unemployment rate	-0.036 (-0.26)	0.215 (1.97)	-0.007 (-0.06)	-0.270* (-2.50)	0.206 (1.60)	0.216 (1.91)
Urbanization rate	0.076 (0.46)	-0.321* (-2.42)	0.087 (0.50)	0.531*** (3.65)	0.074 (0.42)	0.055 (0.58)
Emigration rate	-0.066*** (-4.84)		0.648*** (4.31)		-0.019 (-0.10)	
Housing permits		0.372** (3.00)		0.054 (0.46)	-0.045 (-0.29)	
N	42	42	42	42	42	42

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses. * < 0.05, ** < 0.01, *** < 0.001. Standard errors have been corrected for clustering at the county level.

EFFECTS OF POLITICAL REMITTANCES ON VOTING BEHAVIOR – Presidential Elections (2004)
PSD = FORMER COMMUNIST PARTY; DEM = DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION PARTY/COALITIONS; NAT = NATIONALIST RADICAL PARTY

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	PSDpet	PSDpet	DEMpet	DEMpet	NATpet	NATpet
Unemployment rate	0.026 (0.24)	0.273* (2.65)	-0.052 (-0.40)	-0.009 (-0.07)	0.074 (0.67)	0.283* (2.50)
Urbanization rate	-0.160 (-1.19)	-0.455** (-3.54)	0.426* (2.30)	0.523*** (5.07)	0.377** (2.80)	0.021 (0.23)
Emigration rate	-0.549*** (-3.78)		0.137 (0.61)		-0.631*** (-4.13)	
Housing permits		0.242 (1.70)		0.268** (2.34)		-0.029 (-0.20)
N	42	42	42	42	42	42

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses. * < 0.05, ** < 0.01, *** < 0.001. Standard errors have been corrected for clustering at the county level.

EFFECTS OF POLITICAL REMITTANCES ON VOTING BEHAVIOR – Presidential Elections (2009)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	PSDpet	PSDpet	DEMpet	DEMpet	NATpet	NATpet
Unemployment rate	0.043 (0.25)	0.154 (0.87)	-0.345 (-1.82)	-0.297 (-1.58)	-0.115 (-0.78)	-0.015 (-0.08)
Urbanization rate	-0.052 (-0.31)	-0.322* (-2.66)	0.284 (1.65)	0.314* (2.69)	0.378 (1.85)	-0.022 (-0.18)
Emigration rate	-0.447** (-2.46)		0.080 (0.40)		-0.681** (-3.14)	
Housing permits		0.031 (0.22)		0.120 (1.11)		-0.083 (-0.58)
N	42	42	42	42	42	42

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses. * < 0.05, ** < 0.01, *** < 0.001. Standard errors have been corrected for clustering at the county level.

Results: Political Remittances

The views of transnational migrants influence their communities of origin.

Counties that have had high levels of migration support center-right, reform parties (DEM in tables above; liberal-democrats).

Counties with high migration show less support for the communist successor party (PSD, the social democrats).

Counties with high migration levels have lower levels of support for nationalist, extreme-right parties (NAT in figures above).

Conclusion

At the multiple levels of this analysis, results indicate that **transnational migration is associated with democratic consolidation** and, at county level, with higher levels of support for center-right parties. Regions with high levels of TN migration are less likely to support communist-successor parties and also less likely to vote in favor of extreme nationalist, right-wing protest parties.

The cross-national analysis shows that, despite other tremendous differences in terms of economic reforms, transition paths, communist legacies, repertoires of mobilization and impact of recession, countries with **high levels of transnational migration** (Poland and Romania) steadily converge towards **democratic consolidation** (**democracy** becomes **the only game in town** due to the **right mix of exit and voice**).

Countries with **low** levels of migration (Hungary and Bulgaria) show signs of instability, with politics shifting towards right-wing extremism, racism (protests and violent attacks against the Gypsy minorities) and nationalism (**recuperation mechanisms** **rely primarily on voice** and citizens continue to exclusively depend on the state).