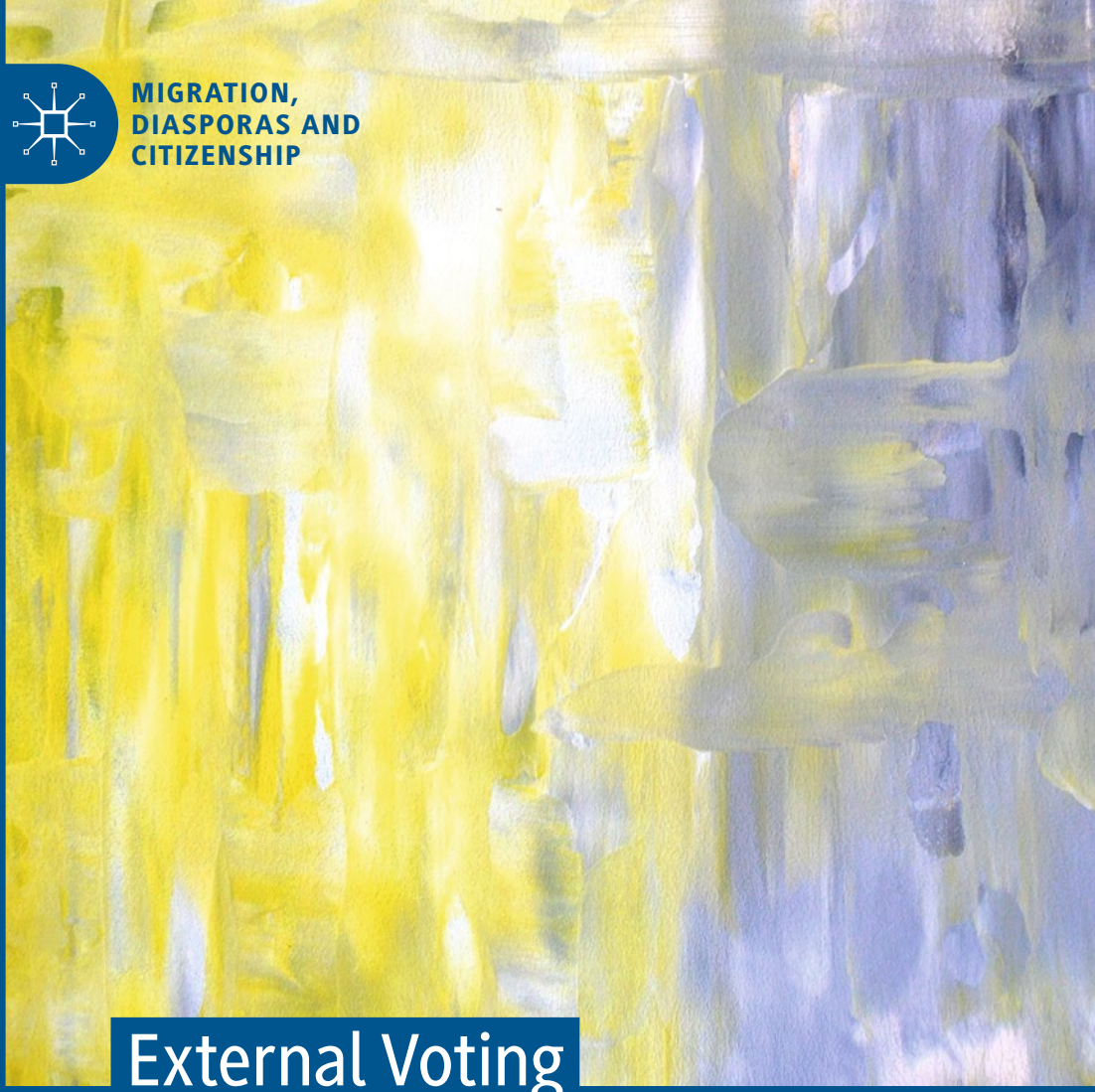

MIGRATION, DIASPORAS AND CITIZENSHIP

External Voting

The Patterns and Drivers of Central European Migrants' Homeland Electoral Participation

Kacper Szulecki
Marta Bivand Erdal
Ben Stanley

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Abstract The chapter introduces the phenomenon of external voting, defined as exercising voting rights by citizens who are temporarily or permanently residing outside their country of origin. We delimit this form of electoral participation from similar forms of transnational politics and discuss the history and diffusion of expatriate enfranchisement, now covering a majority of countries in the world. We then go through the different features of external voting—where is it present, what sorts of elections are covered, what are the modes of organizing elections, how are ballots counted in different political systems, and what the criteria of eligibility might be. Finally, we review the extant literature on external voting, originating in comparative politics and in migration studies, and highlight some gaps that this book seeks to fill.

Keywords External voting • Electoral participation • Democratization • Transnational politics • Migrant voting behavior

When someone says "democracy," what is the first image that comes to your mind? Quite likely, many readers will answer—casting a ballot. Elections and voting are the core practices of democratic politics; they beat out the rhythm of political contests and provide the most important time horizon for elected policymakers. Votes—the term comes from the Latin word for a wish—constitute a clear expression of the people's will in

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the dominant democratic imaginary. Logically, rule of the people must be based on voting. Elections epitomize the ideal of a popular rule to such an extent that even authoritarian dictatorships often hold them to legitimize their power and bask in democracy's reflected glory (Knutsen et al., 2017).

Beyond the simple mechanics of selecting between pregiven options and throwing the ballot into a box at a polling station, what is also almost intuitively grasped is the connection between voting rights and citizenship. Apart from having a passport, exercising the right to vote is the visible expression of citizenship. As modern democracies developed, enfranchisement expanded, and voting rights were acquired by new groups to finally reach the standard of universal adult suffrage as a liberal democratic norm. For citizens, voting is presented as a right, as well as a duty; as of 2022, electoral participation is compulsory in 21 countries, including Belgium and North Korea, though subject to different sanctions (CIA, 2022).

Modern nation-states are spatially bound, that is, they exercise sovereignty over a clearly specified territory. This is a fairly recent blending of geography and politics where citizenship becomes tied to territory. Globally, of 190 surveyed countries, 37 states base citizenship rules mainly on *jus soli*, that is on birthright—anyone born in the state becomes a citizen (van der Baaren & Vink, 2021). Most of these countries are in the Americas. Meanwhile, a majority of states base their citizenship regulations on *jus sanguinis*—or by descent: anyone with a parent (sometimes a father only) becomes a citizen. However, Van der Baaren and Vink (2021) find that most states—and increasingly—have provisions to allow the inclusion of citizens based also on *jus domicile*—by residence, when people naturalize to become citizens, as well as provisions, for example, for the children of migrants to also allow them citizenship. While there may be different reasons for these developments, among them is the idea that residency and membership are closely connected, and thus also a foundation for political participation in society's affairs.

Meanwhile, one of modernity's key features, alongside the expansion of democratic enfranchisement, has been the increase in mobility and international migration. When citizenship, a political principle tied to territory, meets the fluid realities of human mobility, some important and difficult practical questions emerge. What if a citizen is temporarily abroad when an election is held? Or to complicate things—what if a citizen of state A resides permanently in state B, but wants to take part in elections held in their homeland?

This is the subject of our book, and in this introductory chapter, we begin by defining and delimiting external voting. We then briefly sketch its historical development and expansion, up until its contemporary status as a dominant feature in a majority of democratic as well as authoritarian electoral systems. We take a closer look at the way the external voting landscape is organized, which states grant their non-resident citizens voting rights, under what conditions, in what types of elections, and how the voting and then counting votes are organized. Further, we review the literature on external voting which has emerged on the frontiers of political science and migration studies and identify some gaps which this volume seeks to fill, before providing a run-through of the remainder of the book and in the next chapter, introducing the focus of our empirical analysis—Central European migrants in Western Europe.

Defining External Voting

Non-resident citizens' participation in country-of-origin elections goes by many names. "Expatriate voting" (Escobar et al., 2015), "emigrant voting" (Ciornei & Østergaard-Nielsen, 2020), "out-of-country voting" (Brand, 2014; Globalcit, 2022), "overseas voting" (Jaca & Torneo, 2021), "absentee," "extraterritorial," or "diaspora voting" (Lafleur, 2015), "voting from abroad" (Ellis et al., 2007; Peltoniemi et al., 2022), or "at a distance" (Calderón, 2003) all describe similar practices, though with some possible differences. In this book, we use the most common term to describe it: *external voting*. We see it as a solid analytical term, not easily conflated with more ambiguous ones derived from everyday language. Unlike "expatriate voting," it does not suggest a focus only on short-term or recent migrants. Unlike "voting from abroad" or "at a distance," it does not emphasize the method of casting ballots—which may be by post, proxy, or digital—over the relationship of non-resident citizens with their country of origin. Furthermore, non-resident citizens may vote on the territory of their country of origin using provisions established for external voting.

The milestone 2007 IDEAS Handbook *Voting from Abroad* defines external voting as "provisions and procedures which enable some or all electors of a country who are temporarily or permanently outside the country to exercise their voting rights from outside the territory of the country" (Nohlen & Grotz, 2007, p. 65). Lafleur notes that due to the restrictive nature of early external voting legislation, its definition could be

reduced to identifying three steps which describe the procedure: voter registration abroad, casting votes through several different modalities, and finally, the counting and allocation of these votes depending on election regulation (Lafleur, 2015, pp. 842–843). However, the qualitative and quantitative transformations of external voting practices in the last decades require a more nuanced definition, which Lafleur proposes as "the active and passive voting rights of qualified individuals, independently of their professional status, to take part from outside the national territory in referenda or in supra-national, national, or sub-national elections held in a country of which they hold citizenship but where they permanently or temporarily do not reside" (Lafleur, 2015, p. 843).

What these definitions share is the emphasis on casting votes from outside the territory when the election or referendum is held, limitations that can apply in terms of eligibility (e.g., length of residence abroad), the fact that voting rights apply to different kinds of elections, and that these rights may be active (casting a ballot) or passive (standing for election).

The reason why we put so much emphasis on the term's delimitation and definition is that external voting remains poorly understood in public debate and, compared to other forms of electoral participation, received only limited attention in the academic literature. The rights linked to citizenship, which are focused on and nested in the individual, and those of residence, emphasizing spatial rootedness and boundedness of nation-states, create an unresolvable tension which explains why external voting is also politically controversial (Himmelroos & Peltoniemi, 2021; Michel & Blatter, 2021). It is also partly the reason for why it was not a feature of voting systems in many countries before the 1990s and is still subject to restrictions in some democratic states.

Meanwhile, a related but distinct issue is the question of immigrant voting in the country of residence, which has received growing attention. This falls outside the scope of our investigation, suffice to note that the people about whom we write—migrants voting in elections "back home" are the very same people whom others might write about in relation to voting in their countries of residence. Furthermore, it is worth noting that some people hold dual citizenship, as an increasing number of states also accept dual citizenship (Vink et al., 2019)—in this case, they may have voting rights in national elections both in the country of origin and where they are now living. Others might only have the citizenship of one, or the other, of these countries, with related voting rights. And many countries allow long-term residents, even if they are not citizens, to vote in local

elections (see also Schmid et al., 2019). Meanwhile, "irregular migrants," mostly asylum seekers, might not have any voting rights at all. Thus, the focus of our book is on a specific subset of elections which migrants might be voting in, namely those in their country of origin.

Expansion of Emigrant Franchise

The idea of extraterritorial representation of citizens, who are not present in their homeland during elections, predates modern democracy. Ellis points to ancient Rome under Emperor Augustus as the first example of proto-external voting, when senators of the 28 newly established colonies expressed their preferences for electing city offices in the metropole. In terms of voting modalities, it was a postal vote—sealed ballots were sent to Rome and joined the pool of other votes there (Ellis, 2007, p. 41). Another symbolic milestone for external voting is more modern, but not entirely "external." During the American Civil War, Wisconsin—a Northern state—allowed absentee voting among its soldiers in the Union Army in 1862. They were voting from the US territory, but outside their state of origin. Finally, New Zealand, in 1890, and Australia, in 1902, made provisions for voting among seafarers, and Great Britain enfranchised its soldiers fighting in the trenches of World War I, allowing for absentee voting by proxy. During the Great War, also Canada and New Zealand made provisions for external voting among their servicemen. Limiting external voting rights to soldiers, seamen, diplomats, and civil servants is still practiced and sets the boundaries for external voting rights in many countries throughout the twentieth century (Ellis, 2007, p. 42; Lafleur, 2015, p. 842).

A less known case of expatriate, though not out-of-country, voting are the 1920 and 1921 referenda (plebiscites) organized on German-Polish ethnic borderlands, East Prussia and Upper Silesia. There, non-residents who were born in these areas but emigrated (mostly to the Ruhr basin) were allowed to travel to their localities of origin to cast a ballot in favor of either German or Polish sovereignty over the contested territory. Despite the difficulty of traveling at a long distance, some 100,000–150,000 expatriates turned up for the East Prussian plebiscite, and as many as 200,000 in the Upper Silesian plebiscite. In the latter case, 19.3% of total ballots cast by non-resident expatriates turned out to be a swing vote in favor of Germany in many localities and counties (Gołasz, 2020; Węcki, 2021).

The main problems of external voting at the time were technical. Collecting ballots overseas meant that for them to be included, elections had to be extended significantly. For instance, in the 1945 elections in the United Kingdom, where military personnel, seafarers, diplomats, and civil servants working abroad were allowed to vote, counting was delayed by three weeks to allow for their ballots to be delivered. Meanwhile, the levels of international migration in the mid-twentieth century, once displaced persons and prisoners of war returned home from World War II, were still modest. So was the number of independent nation-states and democracies holding competitive elections.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the world went through two major waves of democracy expansion. The first one followed decolonization in the 1960s and 1970s, the second—the fall of numerous dictatorships at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, most importantly in the Communist bloc, but also elsewhere, for example, the Philippines, Paraguay, or South African Republic.

This last wave of democratization coincides with the diffusion of external voting rights. As Nohlen and Grotz note (Nohlen & Grotz, 2007, p. 65), even in some long-established democracies, like the United Kingdom and West Germany, citizens did not obtain external voting rights until the 1980s, or 1990s in the case of Japan. In other words, it was not only the increasing number of new democracies, but the emergence of what some scholars perceive as an international norm around external voting rights (Lafleur, 2015; Rhodes & Harutyunyan, 2010). The flip side, as we have already noted, is immigrant enfranchisement in host countries, which similarly to external voting can be seen either as a sign of deeper democratization or of undermining the core principles of the citizenship/territory nexus (Caramani & Grotz, 2015; Reidy, 2021).

These newly democratized states were often also contributors to increasing international migration. Indeed, developing and transition countries accounted for a large share of outward migration. Migration was also linked to international or civil conflict, and post-authoritarian or formerly war thorn countries had considerable political diasporas as well as groups of refugees abroad (Brand, 2006, 2010). Faced with significant numbers of citizens outside their borders, states were inclined to consider émigré enfranchisement, for normative as well as pragmatic reasons, such as to keep emigrants connected to homeland, sustaining the inflow of remittances and potential return migration in the future (Baser, 2016).

The pressure for political participation of migrants rises with the growing migrant population. The 2022 World Migration Report estimates that in 2020 there were some 281 million international migrants globally, constituting 3.6% of the world's population (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2022). While the estimates of global migration are unreliable, this is a clear increase since 1990 when the figure was about 155 million or 2.87% of the global population, or in 2000 when the figure was about 172 million or about 2.83% of the global population, and more clearly since, with a rise to 221 million international migrants in 2010, or about 3.17% of the global population, and in 2015 to 249 million, or about 3.37% if the global population (IOM, 2022). This means that the share of international migrants of the global population is rising, as their number grows faster than total world population, albeit not at all dramatically, and still at just above 3% in 2020, meaning that more than 96% of the global population are, in fact, not international migrants. That said, the 281 million people who are international migrants constitute a higher number of people than the entire population of the fourth most populous country in the world, Indonesia, with some 275 million inhabitants. Thus, international migration is a force to be reckoned with.

In sum, the number of states that enfranchise their citizens residing outside national borders has grown rapidly over the past three decades, and particularly since the turn of the century (Fliess & Østergaard-Nielsen, 2021; Navarro et al., 2007; Turcu & Urbatsch, 2015). By 2007, some 115 countries and territories allowed for external voting—over a half of United Nations members. Currently, this number is at around 130 countries (Himmelroos & Peltoniemi, 2021; Peltoniemi et al., 2022).

External Voting Landscape: Countries, Elections, Criteria, and Modalities

Some two-thirds of states and territories allow for some form of external voting. This landscape is, however, very varied in terms of conditions for voting, modalities (how the voting can occur), and which types of elections are covered. There are also different regional patterns of external voting possibilities. Up to date datasets and overviews are difficult to maintain due to the regulations which may change from year to year and from election to election. However, the IDEAS dataset, covering 214 countries and related territories, lists 28 African countries, 16 countries in

the Americas, 20 in Asia, 41 in Europe (Western, Central, and Eastern), and 10 in the Pacific region with external voting provisions in place, and five more where external voting is legally allowed but where it has not yet been implemented (Navarro et al., 2007).

A more recent dataset, prepared by the Global Citizenship Observatory (GLOBALCIT) at the European University Institute, looks at 28 European Union member states, 20 American countries, Australia, New Zealand, and Switzerland and provides updates on "conditions for electoral rights," including external voting regulations (Globalcit, 2019). Of these 51 countries, in 2019 40 offered some provision for external voting. The most comprehensive source of data on external voting provisions is the recent Extraterritorial Voting Rights and Restrictions Dataset (1950–2020), where the authors note that "enfranchisement of non-residents is both multifaceted and dynamic. Countries that enfranchise non-resident citizens face an array of choices as to how voting will be facilitated and incorporated into the existing political system" (Wellman et al., 2022, p. 1).

External voting provisions may apply to five different types of elections: national legislative elections, presidential elections, referendums, and subnational (e.g., local) elections as well as supra-national elections. The latter are only available in some EU member states, which allow non-resident citizens to vote on national Member of European Parliament (MEP) candidates from abroad—even though EU legislation gives all EU citizens the right to vote in European Parliament elections based on residence, not citizenship. The other case, as Lafleur points out, is the Andean Parliament (Lafleur, 2015, p. 845). Looking only at the first four types of elections, the IDEAS dataset lists as many as nine different combinations of external voting rights, where no country limited external voting rights to referenda only (although historically this limitation has occurred).

In terms of criteria of eligibility and entitlement for external voting, most restrictive countries (14 in 2007) limit these to diplomats and other officials on duty or military personnel. This group includes two states boasting a large historic diaspora—Israel and Ireland, the latter listed as the sole EU member state with such restrictive external voting rights.[1] Also Cyprus, Malta, and Denmark limit external voting eligibility to

[1] Not counting Greece, which is among the five countries that have legal provisions for external voting but has not implemented them in practice. However, since residence does not exist as a legal category in Greek electoral regulation, non-resident citizens can vote if they are present in the country and can stand as candidates.

specific categories of expatriate citizens or based on length of stay abroad, and the intention of return (Globalcit, 2019).

There are five modes of external voting used: personal voting at a polling station in the country of residence (often a diplomatic mission); postal voting; voting by proxy (selecting a plenipotentiary who casts the émigrés ballot in the country of origin); voting by fax; and e-voting. Postal voting has also developed a subvariant, known as voting by a massager (Sweden) and with a witness (Finland) (Navarro et al., 2007; Wass et al., 2021; Weide, 2021). On top of these modalities, there is also a combination of ways in which electoral registration takes place, how and according to what principles it is organized, how early prior to the election one has to register, and so forth. Some countries only allow for in-person voting at polling stations abroad if a certain threshold number of registered voters is reached (e.g., 20 for Bulgaria, 30 for Brazil, but as many as 500 for Senegal) (Navarro et al., 2007, p. 25).

Finally, once external votes are cast, the question of where they go, how they are counted, and how émigré voters are represented in the political system remains. In some cases, all votes cast externally are summed up as part of a "diaspora" constituency (e.g., Czech Republic). In others, they are assigned to the locality of voter's last residence (e.g., Hungary). Finally, they may be merged with votes cast by homeland voters, for example, in the capital (as is the case in Poland, where all external votes are added to Warsaw 1 district). Some 12 countries secure political representation of emigrants in their parliaments. Some of them (e.g., Capo Verde and Italy) distinguish between the countries of residence of voting migrants and reserve a certain number of seats, for example, for those living in the Americas and Europe (see also Laguerre, 2015).

The European Union is a particularly interesting case for external voting, and as of 2020, almost all European countries allow their nationals to cast ballots outside their territories (Commission, 2020). The peculiarity of the EU, and more specifically the Schengen area (which includes, e.g., Norway but does not include Ireland, Bulgaria, or Romania), is that one of the Union's key freedoms—freedom of movement—undermines the notion of residency. EU citizens can live for years in other EU member states without formally losing residency in countries of origin and often without registering in host countries. Enfranchised automatically in local and supranational elections in countries of residence, they enjoy more political rights than many non-EU migrants who spent more time in respective host countries.

What Do We Know About External Voting? Migration Studies Meet Political Science

Despite the globally expanding émigré enfranchisement and the clear potential impact of migrant votes on politics in some regions, external voting has been, according to Lafleur, a "research topic attracting little scholarly attention" (Lafleur, 2015, p. 840). Several years since these words were written, the situation has not changed significantly, even though external voting lies at the intersection of two academic disciplines—comparative and migration studies to an extent, in the domain broadly labeled *transnational political practices* (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003) or just *political transnationalism* (Boccagni et al., 2016).

While there are significant exceptions from this apparent disinterest (see, for example, Brand, 2010; Collyer, 2014; Escobar et al., 2015; Finn, 2020; Goldberg & Lanz, 2019; Lafleur & Sánchez-Domínguez, 2015), it appears that comparative politics students are yet to acknowledge the significance of emigrant electoral engagement, while migration scholars need to overcome their reticence toward formalized political practices and institutions. Furthermore, many studies of migrant electoral behavior concern the way immigrants vote in the elections of their countries of residence, even though there are still significant barriers to immigrant enfranchisement (Barker & McMillan, 2017; Kayran & Erdilmen, 2021). The disproportionate attention paid to immigrant voting versus external voting is explained, for example, by data availability and the interest within receiving societies.

However, as the editors of a recent special issue of *Frontiers in Political Science* dedicated to voting from abroad note, "with more citizens living and working outside of their home country and new technologies making it ever easier for emigrants to participate in the homeland politics, the topic of emigrant voting is highly relevant" (Peltoniemi et al., 2022, p. 2).

Fliess and Østergaard-Nielsen (2021) summarize the extant literature in four categories, which are also to some extent chronologically arranged "waves" of research. The first wave concentrated on the normative debate on legitimacy of external voting, followed by studies of why states grant emigrant voting rights. Third wave comprises studies on the creation of special emigrant representation systems. The fourth and most recent wave according to these authors moves beyond the state as the main unit of analysis, for example, by unpacking the role political parties play in the enfranchisement process and in oversees voter mobilization (Kernalegenn

& van Haute, 2020; Umpierrez de Reguero & Dandoy, 2021). A somewhat specific offshoot here is the literature on authoritarian states and diaspora mobilization, which also includes the question of external voting (Baser & Féron, 2022; Böcü & Baser, 2022; Koinova, 2021).

Several studies, like Lafleur and Sánchez-Domínguez (2015), explore the determinants of external voting, but knowledge on why migrants vote the way they do is still limited. However, even a passing look at the voting outcomes in different national elections, and the number of votes cast abroad reveals an additional puzzle: a grand majority emigré voters *do not participate in elections* (Ciornei & Østergaard-Nielsen, 2020; Hutcheson & Arrighi, 2015; Jaca & Torneo, 2021; Szulecki et al., 2021). This suggests that beyond asking why migrants vote the way they do, we also need to ask the more fundamental question: why they vote, or not, in the first place, and inquire into the determinants of electoral *turnout* in external voting. This clearly means moving beyond the four waves that Fliess and Østergaard-Nielsen have identified. Rather than concentrating on the legitimacy of external voting, diffusion of voting provisions and explanatory factors behind them, we want to inquire about the way migrants use the opportunity that external voting enfranchisement gives them.

We therefore see a fifth wave emerging, to which we hope this book will contribute—studying how external voting is practiced, including voting results, turnout, and the meaning of this form of political engagement for migrants in terms of their political expression connection to their countries of origin.

This brings us to the core puzzles which drive this new wave of research and motivate our book. How do migrants use their external voting franchise? What parties and candidates do they vote when they have the opportunity? And finally, do the results of external voting differ systematically from domestic results? Another set of questions relates to the turnout. While media coverage of some expatriate votes emphasizes their scale and possible influence on homeland politics, existing research, as was already noted, and anecdotal evidence from many elections, suggests that external voting suffers from very low turnout. If that is the case, what can explain why (so few) migrants take part in homeland (electoral) politics? How do the migrants themselves see this form of political engagement and what does external voting tell us about migrant political participation? Finally, on a more theoretical level, how is it related to political remittances?

What does the literature tell us so far? First of all, research on external voting in country-of-origin election is dominated by national case studies

of either specific countries of origin or countries of residence (Boccagni, 2011; Burean & Popp, 2015; Escobar et al., 2015; Finn, 2020; Gamlen, 2015; Goldberg & Lanz, 2019; Itzigsohn & Villacrés, 2008; Lafleur & Chelius, 2011; Lafleur & Sánchez-Domínguez, 2015; Leal et al., 2012; Lesińska, 2018; McIlwaine & Bermudez, 2015; Mencütek, 2015; Mügge et al., 2019; Peltoniemi, 2018; Sevi et al., 2020).

Where larger comparative studies exist, they focus on explaining the emergence and horizontal diffusion of external voting rights, that is—why do sending countries grant expatriates the right to vote in the first place (Arrighi & Lafleur, 2019; Caramani & Grotz, 2015; Collyer, 2014; Collyer & Vathi, 2007; Erlingsson & Tuman, 2017; Hartmann, 2015; Hutcheson & Arrighi, 2015; Lafleur, 2011, 2015; Palop-García & Pedroza, 2017; Rhodes & Harutyunyan, 2010; Umpierrez de Reguero et al., 2021; Wellman, 2021). Another issue attracting attention has been the impact of party mobilization and party activity abroad (Burgess & Tyburski, 2020; Fliess, 2021; Kernalegenn & van Haute, 2020; Lazzari, 2019; Østergaard-Nielsen et al., 2019; Umpierrez de Reguero & Dandoy, 2020). Electoral turnout has also been the object of analysis, though studies of the factors that can account for turnout and results beyond a single country of origin or residence remain scarce (Chaudhary, 2018; Ciornei & Østergaard-Nielsen, 2020; Ognibene & Paulis, 2021; Pallister, 2020; Szulecki et al., 2021).

The focus on state agency (granting external voting rights) and homeland political parties has so far meant the limited or denied political agency of emigrants in the study of external voting. While research on remittances beyond money transfers, that is, "social" as well as "political remittances," has expanded greatly in the past quarter century (see, for instance, Kessler & Rother, 2016; Krawatzek & Müller-Funk, 2020; Leblang, 2017; Levitt, 1998; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011), the understanding of external voting as a mode of political engagement with the "homeland" is still very limited (but see De Lazzari, 2021; Erdal et al., 2022; Lafleur, 2013, Chap. 6; Peltoniemi, 2018; Tabar, 2014).

This book offers a comparative analysis of external voting practices—that is both election results, turnout, and insights on the way migrants perceive external voting as a mode or transnational political engagement. We draw on two datasets built within the framework of the DIASPOlitic project, collecting all elections for Central European "sending countries," divided by external voting results among expatriate voters in Western European "host countries," as well as interviews with Polish and Romanian

migrants living in Norway and Spain. The next chapter introduces our empirical case, external voting among Central-Eastern European migrants living in Western Europe, and we outline the context of their political engagement, namely, the apparent democratic backsliding in many countries of the region. Further, the chapter introduces the research project on which the book is based, describing its quantitative and qualitative components, data gathering procedures, and methods used for analyzing the data.

The next empirical chapters address the puzzles we have presented earlier. Chapter 3 asks how migrants vote when they have the opportunity and whether the results of external voting differ systematically from domestic results. Chapter 4 interrogates why (so few) migrants take part in homeland (electoral) politics and what external voting tells us about migrants' transnational political participation. The Conclusion brings together insights from both these empirical endeavors, but also introduces a normative question—should nonresident citizens have the right to vote? We seek to answer it drawing not only on the existing studies in law and political philosophy, but also the findings of our project and migrants' own perceptions of external voting legitimacy.

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CHAPTER 2

Emigration and Transnational Political Practices in Central and Eastern Europe After EU Enlargement 2004–2007

Abstract As the European Union expanded eastward in 2004 and 2007 to cover the formerly communist states of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), this triggered a wave of migration which saw millions of people moving to Western and Northern European countries. What impact did that migration have on the politics of CEE countries, and what might be the relationship between outward migration and the apparent democracy backsliding occurring in some parts of the region? This is the main puzzle of this book, which looks at the way external voting results can be used to assess migrant political preferences and their change over time, as well as their potential influence on domestic politics in sending countries. This chapter sketches the political context of CEE and introduces the data gathering procedure and methodology of the project on which the book draws.

Keywords European Union • Eastern Enlargement • Central and Eastern Europe • Backsliding • Populism • Migration • Transnational politics

In the growing literature on external voting, intra-European migration does not play the most prominent role. Some noteworthy European sending countries receive significant attention (e.g., Romania), but European Union (EU) states are most often than not analyzed as host countries for incoming extra-European migration, whose political engagement is

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analyzed. And yet, the politics of intra-European migration require a better understanding, and election results among migrants can tell us something new about the dynamics of socialization, integration, and transnational engagement.

The questions we posed in the Introduction, that is—how do migrants use their external voting franchise? what parties and candidates do they vote for and do the results of external voting differ systematically from domestic results? are relevant in the context of the EU. What we are witnessing in Europe recently is the convergence of two phenomena—mass intra-European migration and democracy backsliding. Incidentally, the region which received most attention in terms of the rise of populist politics and the deterioration of liberal democratic standards—Central Eastern Europe (CEE)—is also a major "sender" of intra-European migrants.

We are also interested in the way external voting is enacted and interpreted by migrants, why so few migrants take part in country-of-origin elections, how migrants see this form of political engagement, and what does external voting tell us about migrant political participation? Analyzing intra-European migration gives us a unique opportunity to tackle these questions, because external voting is (nearly) universal within the EU, and barriers for political engagement are low, while countries of origin remain both spatially and mentally close, in contrast to intercontinental migration and global South-North mobility.

In the remainder of this chapter, we describe the context of external voting among CEE migrants residing in the European Union, European Free Trade Association countries, and the United Kingdom. We discuss the apparent yet under-researched convergence of mass migration and democracy backsliding and ask whether these two can be related. To bridge them, we hypothesize about the nature of political remittances—either democratic or illiberal. We then introduce the research design which allows us to analyze voting results and migrant perceptions of external voting, drawing on two newly built datasets.

East-West Migration in Europe: Political Context and Consequences

While Europe is always said to be in crisis, the recent rise in Eurosceptic attitudes and the increased prominence of populist and nationalist forces in parliaments and, in some cases, governments of EU member states have caused considerable concern. Both academic and non-academic observers

have begun to speak of "democratic backsliding"—the deconsolidation of liberal democracy and an orientation toward illiberal and authoritarian hybrid regimes, accompanied by the erosion of civic liberties and values (Bermeo, 2016). Authoritarian values are visibly on the rise in Europe, especially among the younger generation (Foa & Mounk, 2016).

This trend is said to be particularly prominent in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), where democratic consolidation has arguably never fully completed, making it more vulnerable to backsliding. In recent years, Viktor Orbán's self-proclaimed illiberal Hungary has been joined by the indirect personal rule of Jarosław Kaczyński in Poland, and the gradual introduction of illiberal "innovation" in the Czech Republic under president Miloš Zeman and oligarch-turned-prime-minister Andrej Babiš (Hanley & Vachudova, 2017). Other CEE countries are also struggling with the erosion of liberal democratic standards. What these political forces clearly share is an inherent hostility to the mechanisms and values of constitutionalism: "constraints on the will of the majority, checks and balances, protections for minorities, and even fundamental rights" (compare also Müller, 2016, p. 68; Blokker, 2018).

There are two common explanations for this backsliding. One emphasizes domestic dynamics, arguing that economic conditions, political culture, and other supply and demand factors have worked together to bring illiberal forces to power (Stanley, 2017). The other focuses on the simultaneous emergence of similar developments in different countries. The concept of "authoritarian diffusion" tries to capture this phenomenon (Buzogány, 2017), along with looser notions of a "Trump effect," or invocation of some populist *Zeitgeist* haunting Europe.

Both domestic and transnational factors surely matter. What is striking, however, is the rather simplistic image of European politics and of the EU as a set of easily separable polities and national societies. Both above explanations largely ignore the multi-level nature of EU governance and the degree of contact and exchange between European citizens, including through perhaps the most significant "channel" of East-West exchange in the past two decades: *migration*.

From the perspective of the "new" EU members, the Eastern Enlargement of 2004–2007 should be viewed as the culmination of a long process with its roots in the Yalta division of Europe and the fall of Communism in 1989. This process was informed by the narrative of a "return to Europe" (Szulecki, 2015) and characterized by high levels of Euro-enthusiasm among CEE societies, as well as convergence toward more consolidated liberal

democratic governance which was secured by membership conditionality (Vachudová, 2005). In that context, the mass wave of migrations that followed was portrayed in positive terms, not as a response to high unemployment and economic deprivation at home, but as an opportunity for improving life chances in the "West." That "European dream" coming true was coupled with the dominant vision of intra-European migrations as "fluid" and largely temporary. You go, you see, you earn, and you come back. Everyone wins. Parts of the host populations shared these latter hopes, since the "European dream" of "Eastern" migrants was immediately reinterpreted as a possible nightmare of "Western" societies, personified by the Polish plumber arriving to take their jobs.

Central European countries are among the most important "senders" and have provided Western and Northern European EU/EEA members with an estimated 6 million migrants—a whole "continent moving West' (Black et al., 2010). "Europe historically has been made, unmade, and remade through the movement of peoples," notes Favell (2009, p. 167). And yet, 15 years since the Eastern Enlargement, we know surprisingly little about the impact this exodus had on intra-European relations.

Symptomatically, Thomas Risse's landmark work on European identity does not even mention intra-EU diasporas, although it pays considerable attention to the impact of the enlargement on European identity (Risse, 2010). On the other hand, the topical textbook on *Migration and Mobility in the European Union* makes absolutely no reference to electoral politics and voting, external or in host countries (Geddes et al., 2020). Similarly, an edited volume on Migration in the New Europe, published in the year of the first Eastern Enlargement, discusses various impacts membership expansion may have, but the only area of politics it refers to is migration and labor policy (Górny & Ruspini, 2004).

Yes, the impact of migrants on the host countries has received attention, particularly in the context of the Brexit vote where CEE migrants were turned into a scapegoat. Favell's astute conceptualization of the three types of migrations flows shaping Europe is an excellent example. He distinguishes between outward-in "ethnic" migration, small-scale but symbolically important elite "free mover" migration between member states, and the "politically ambiguous" East-West migration, which cannot be easily pinpointed even though this "new form of migration has in the last few years grown to become the most important visible proof of a changing Europe" (Favell, 2009, p. 182).

This is obviously significant for intra-European relations, but it also has an important impact on sending countries. What we are only beginning to

realize is the scale and nature of the influence this massive migration wave had on sending societies. New EU member states have to deal with the fact that a large share of their populations suddenly resides abroad. In absolute terms, Romania, with ca. 3 million, and Poland, ca. 2 million emigrants, were the largest contributors, but perhaps instead of looking at absolute numbers of emigrants we should understand how large fractions of sending country populations they represent. Migration rates vary from 5% of the population of the Czech Republic to nearly a fifth of the populations of Latvia (17%) and Lithuania (19.9%) (Lesińska, 2016). Most of those who moved left someone behind: spouses, children, boyfriends and girlfriends, parents. Taken together, this makes post-2004 migration a generational experience for almost all CEE societies.

These large and populous post-accession diasporas are enfranchised to vote in country-of-origin elections, and in principle their vote can make a difference in national elections (Hutcheson & Arrighi, 2015; Lesińska, 2018). Who these migrants from CEE countries are matters in this context. While much attention has been paid to the impact of CEE migrants on labor markets, less emphasis has been put on understanding who these migrants are in terms of regional origin, educational and professional backgrounds, or indeed political convictions. Although "the Polish plumber" has become a common reference, and Polish and other CEE migrants across Western-European countries (such as Norway, the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands) disproportionately work in the construction sector, and through various related staffing agencies, this does not necessarily reflect their educational and professional backgrounds prior to migration (Erdal & Lewicki, 2016; Meardi, 2016).

Apart from financial gains, an important element emphasized by the pro-European, liberal CEE elites was the foreseen socialization of migrants into European values and political practices. It was assumed that when exposed to life in mature democracies and welfare states, CEE migrants would—whether they settled or returned to their country of origin—integrate themselves into a "European way of life."

Indeed, some research on diasporas confirms this belief, suggesting that through settling in a consolidated democracy, migrants from less consolidated transitional regimes might internalize values and adopt the practices of their hosts, and in turn "remit democracy home" (Pérez-Armendáriz & Crow, 2010). Much like exiles and Western charities before 1989, contemporary migrants were to send eastward gifts and parcels—also in the form of ideas of how "good governance" works.

Migration researchers have shown that the experience of emigration to a consolidated democracy increases migrants' satisfaction with democracy (Careja & Emmenegger, 2012), even though some may have minimal contact with the host society, for example, because they do not know the language, and financial success may be a factor here (Mishler & Rose, 2001). Members of diasporas who were socialized into liberal values in Western societies might be interested in transferring them to their homelands as "social" or "political" remittances (Erdal et al., 2022; Krawatzek & Müller-Funk, 2020; Levitt, 1998; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). In more normative terms, these experiences can then lead to *democratic remittances* as migrants return or share their experience with families and friends back home thus contributing to the democratization—or increasing the quality of democracy—in their countries of origin.

Yet, a passing look at the empirical evidence suggests that the idea of democratic remittances does not translate unproblematically to the context of contemporary Europe. The CEE diasporas living in Western and Northern Europe, once hailed as the vanguard of liberalism in terms of their political preferences as expressed in sending country elections (e.g., the 2007 Polish snap election where migrants were said to contribute to ousting Kaczyński's Law and Justice), now appear much more heterogeneous. To stay with the same example, Poland's 2015 election saw a surprising shift, where the diaspora supported right-wing populists and nationalists to a much greater extent than did voters at home. The same was true for Latvians in 2018 (Lulle, 2018). And while a number of disclaimers is due—the diaspora turnout is low, it varies geographically within and across receiving and sending countries; demographic factors play a role; and the vote is volatile; among other things—what we can surely say is that democratic remittances are as probable as are *illiberal remittances*, that is the process through which migrants and outward migration contribute to democratic backsliding and the growth of illiberal tendencies in origin countries (Szulecki, 2020).

Democratic remittances presuppose a clear hierarchy. A superior host country (or region), which appears and feels "better" than the home left behind. If there indeed is an illiberal sway among migrants, it can be due to the fact that the West's superiority is no longer a political and cultural axiom at home, and that personal experiences can bring disenchantment as much as fascination or mere satisfaction. We say *disenchantment* rather than disillusionment to underline the quasi-messianic character of the geopolitical "return to Europe" narrative, which was put to test by the Eastern

Enlargement. For Kees Van Kersbergen, quasi-messianism concerns the "visionary anticipation of a better world that is attainable" which accords politics "an enchanting quality" (van Kersbergen, 2010).

Recent ethnographic studies of EU diasporas suggest that there might be a causal mechanism in play, neither directly linked to demographics nor to conscious political agency. Drawing on first-hand accounts, some authors have identified shame, resentment, and disenchantment as key emotional drivers of the migration experience (see, e.g., Pawlak, 2018). It fuels broader disenchantment: with host countries, migration, and more broadly Europe and "the West." This disenchantment is triggered in situations of a discrepancy between real and anticipated levels of welfare, prosperity, social status, but also subjective sense of belonging to the West. "In the thirty years of post-communism"—argues Jarosław Kuisz—"the citizens of Visegrad countries have never been closer or more like Western Europeans, in terms of their material status or the functioning of state institutions, than they are today. Yet there can be no doubt that something significant has changed in recent years. This is simply that in the Visegrad countries, the post-communist myth about the West has lost the power to convince" (Kuisz, 2019).

How are these processes expressed in migrant voting behavior? Are CEE migrants voting for different political forces than voters in their countries of origin? Are these differences systematic, and what does that tell us about migrant socialization, and the character of "political remittances" migrants can send? This book will be the first to systematically deal with external voting. Through this, we seek to map the political shifts in different migrant communities and which is the first step to exploring their links to home and host country developments and the apparent backsliding and growing political fragmentation of the "West" and the "East" in Europe. In the next section, we explain how this is done empirically.

The DIASPOlitic Project, Data Gathering, and Methods

This volume is the direct result of the research project "Understanding the Political Dynamics of Émigré Communities in an Era of European Democratic Backsliding" (DIASPOlitic), a collaboration between the Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo, the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), and the SWPS University in Warsaw. The

project had two empirical packages, which gathered quantitative and qualitative data on external voting results and migrants' perceptions of political engagement with countries of origin, through elections or otherwise. Below, we introduce these two work packages, which are the basis for the empirical chapters that follow.

Data Gathering and Method: Quantitative Analysis of External Voting Results

The "quantitative" work package led to the creation of a comparative dataset of external voting results (Kotnarowski et al., 2022). The data collected concerned the voting of migrants from Central and Eastern European countries, which became member states of the EU in 2004 and 2007, in Northern, Western, and Southern European countries (i.e., the "old" EU member states). Our analysis focused on how the communities of migrants—which we call *diasporas*—voted in elections organized in their countries of origin. For example, we looked at how Poles residing in Norway voted in Polish parliamentary and Polish presidential elections, and Bulgarians settled in France voted in Bulgarian parliamentary elections.

In Step 1, we checked the data availability for all CEE member states. It turned out that the Hungarian electoral system does not allow for the study of external voting, as émigré votes are added up to the constituency in their last registered place of residence in Hungary. Similarly, Estonian and Slovak regulations do not allow for an analysis by country of residence, although we have gathered data on the émigré vote summed together. Finally, Slovenian data was available, and we gathered it for the most recent election at the time, but due to very low numbers of votes cast and few host countries where external voting was organized, we did not include it in Step 2.

The countries of origin included in the main analysis were Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and Romania. On the other hand, the analyzed countries of residence where diasporas cast their votes were Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden (EU members, plus Great Britain which left the EU when the project was ongoing), as well as two countries belonging to the European Economic Area (Norway and Iceland), and Switzerland.

The period of the analyzed data included the most recent elections before the accession of a given country of origin to the EU and every

subsequent election until the first half of 2021, so the first unit of analysis was the last election before 2004 for Czechia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, and the last election before 2007 for Bulgaria and Romania. The summary of analyzed parliamentary election results by country of origin and host country is presented in Table 1 of the project's descriptive report available online (Kotnarowski et al., 2022).[1] For parliamentary elections, we collected data on 573 diaspora external voting events for diasporas from 7 countries of origin voting in 17 host countries between 2000 and 2021.

In addition, we collected data on the voting results in the country of origin—for example, how all Poles voted in the 2001 parliamentary elections, and how all Bulgarians voted in the 2005 elections. Altogether, we collected data on voting results in 35 elections: 6 elections in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland; 5 in the Czech Republic and Romania; and 1 election in Slovenia.

As far as possible due to data availability, we collected the following data for each diaspora, in each host country, and each election: number of registered voters, number of votes cast, number of valid votes, number of votes cast for particular political parties, support for specific parties among those who cast a valid vote. We took into account those parties which gained at least 3% of the electoral support on a national scale. We collected comparable data for election results in the country of origin, that is, how Poles voted in Poland, Bulgarians in Bulgaria, etc.

In our study, we also collected data on diaspora voting in presidential elections. Not all countries of origin organize general presidential elections, and therefore the amount of data is much smaller for this type of voting. For the presidential election, we collected data on voting results in 302 events (see Table 2 in Kotnarowski et al., 2022). This includes diasporas from 6 countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic Lithuania, Romania, Poland, Slovenia) that voted in 17 host countries. The data cover 19 presidential elections (5 in Poland, 4 in Lithuania and Romania, 3 in Bulgaria, 2 in the Czech Republic, and 1 in Slovenia). We also collected data on voting results in the country of origin for each election. The scope of data collected for presidential elections was similar to that for parliamentary elections. We were interested in the number of registered voters, the

[1] The rows of the table indicate host countries, and the columns indicate the year in which the elections were held. Entries of the cells denote the country of origin of the diasporas. For example, the entry PL in the row AT and column 2001 means that our dataset contains the voting results of the Polish diaspora in Austria in the Polish parliamentary elections held in 2001.

number of votes cast, the number of valid votes, and the number of votes cast for individual candidates together with a percentage of support out of valid votes. For those countries where there were two rounds of voting in presidential elections, we collected election results for both rounds.

In both parliamentary and presidential elections, there were situations where in a given election a certain diaspora was able to vote in several locations within the host country. For example, the Polish diaspora in Norway in the 2015 parliamentary elections was able to vote in five polling stations: two in Oslo, and one each in Bergen, Stavanger, and Trondheim. In these situations, we aggregated data from all the election commissions in a given host country. It means that the information we included in the prepared dataset was the total number of voters in the host country, and the total support for each party/presidential candidate in the host country, in the given election.

Based on the dataset we built, many types of analyses can be conducted. In Chap. 3, we describe the specific method used for the analysis of external voters' divergence ("disparity") from country-of-origin results, as well as the ideological deviation between diasporas and sending countries.

Data Gathering and Method: Qualitative Study of Migrant Voting

The "qualitative" work package in turn built a dataset of 80 semi-structured interviews with Polish and Romanian migrants living in Norway and Spain (Bertelli et al., 2021). We selected these four groups because they are very diverse in terms of demographics and specific motivations for migrating, and the perceived importance of external voting in the two sending countries is high, as they both have a legacy of émigré political involvement (Burean & Popp, 2015; Lesińska, 2019). Both Poles and Romanians are among the five largest migrant groups in at least ten Western European countries, although they show regional variation, with Romanians' greater presence in Southern European states, and the Poles' stronger representation in Northern Europe. Spain and Norway display a symmetrical pattern, with Romanians as the largest migrant group (over 1 million) and Poles in seventh place (over 100,000) in Spain, and a reverse situation in Norway, where the Polish diaspora of ca. 120,000 is the largest and the ca. 15,000 Romanians are seventh. While Norway is not an EU member state, the fact that it is part of the EEA and the Schengen Zone in practice means that there is no difference in terms of enfranchisement for EU migrants, and

the country was the destination of the largest influx of post-accession CEE migration in the Nordic region. Pairing Spain and Norway was also motivated by the variation in electoral results (see Chap. 3).

Within the countries of residence, we focused on two cities and their metropolitan regions—Barcelona and Oslo. Both are large centers of immigration and both are "global cities" which see a varied influx of migrants of all ages, classes, and professions. These residence settings vary in many ways; however, our study was not designed to explicitly compare two migrant nationalities or cities of settlement but is exploratory and instead seeks to maintain important variance in the reported voting behavior among interviewed migrants.

Each of the subgroups comprised 20 respondents. The interviews were conducted between January and April 2020: In the first part of the interview process, interviews were conducted face-to-face in both cities, while the second part of the interview process (from March 2020 onward) was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. To complete the scheduled interviews in a safe way, these were conducted online by means of Skype video conversations. The interviews with Polish migrants were conducted in Polish, those with migrants from Romania in Romanian. Both the in-person and the online interviews were recorded, transcribed in full, and translated into English.

The interview guide was a theme guide, co-developed by the authors and the research team at a workshop in January 2020. The theme guide was developed purposefully to address the project's research questions, exploring the political engagement of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe especially in their countries of origin. The theme guide also took into account the two migrant groups (Poles and Romanians) and the two-settlement context in focus (Barcelona, Spain, and Oslo, Norway).

The theme guide consisted of nine sections: (1) Migration story; (2) Future and past—lifespan reflections; (3) Poland/Romania engaging their diasporas politically (voting and beyond); (4) Specifically, in relation to the most recent election (October 2019 Polish parliamentary elections or November 2019 Romanian presidential elections); (5) Perceptions of other migrants' voting behavior (Poles/Romanians in Norway/Spain); (6) Perceptions of differences and similarities between Poland/Romania and Norway/Spain; (7) Migration as change; (8) Final comments; (9) Background information (structured basic demographic questions asked to all participants at the end of their interview, to aid comparison and monitor the sample composition in a systematic manner).

While a certain degree of freedom was given to the interviewers in relation to the order of the questions asked, all of the themes agreed in the guide were covered in all interviews. Under section (6) Perceptions of differences and similarities between Poland/Romania and Norway/Spain, we used a table outlining a range of 12 different social, political, and economic themes. In some instances, this table was used in the interview setting, physically on paper, while in other instances the interviewers introduced the themes orally only (this also had to be adapted to the reality of Skype interviews). It was up to each participant to select as many or as few themes to discuss as they wanted to.

The interview transcripts were coded following a codebook developed once all the transcripts had been compiled. The codebook comprised eight main categories broadly mirroring the interview guide (migration history; personal reflections on the self; general comparisons and similarities between countries; political and socio-economic aspects of the countries of residence and origin; perception of diaspora mobilization; personal political opinions; technicalities of voting; and "other," which includes anecdotes, quotes, vignettes). Each of these categories consisted of a number of sub-categories which interview transcripts were coded to. In total, the code book included 72 codes (or themes).

The interviews were coded to all relevant themes, following a cross-thematic coding strategy, where each section of the interview was coded to all the relevant codes. Thus, reading all coded text on one of the 72 individual nodes, for example, "future elections" or "travel to vote" or "reflections on migration" or "queues," allows an overview of the frequency of simultaneous presence of other codes, as well as seeing which interviewees' statements were present (e.g., migrants from Poland in Oslo). In relation to the table of themes for comparison, this coding strategy allowed us to see how prominent each theme is across the four sub-groups, and whether some themes are more salient among Poles or Romanians, or more salient among migrant residents in Oslo or Barcelona. After coding the full interview material, the authors reviewed the coded material, both exploring patterns between groups and between cities, and other key trends emerging, for example, on voting behavior or reflections about migration, for similarity, difference, contradictions, and overall patterns. While the sample of interviewees was not sufficient to claim that the findings are representative—that is, they do not allow us to compare frequencies of certain views occurring—they are very useful in mapping migrant self-perceptions and justifications for different (non)political postures.

This rigorous procedure allowed us to organize vast qualitative material in a way which helped to identify topics, ideas, and frames and to trace them across interviews. The analysis presented in Chap. 4 draws on this material and uses either indirect summaries of interview material or explicit, anonymized quotes as evidence.

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CHAPTER 3

External Voting Patterns: CEE Migrants in Western Europe

Abstract This chapter compares external voting of CEE diasporas in Western Europe with voting patterns observed in those diasporas' respective countries of origin. It focuses on electoral turnout, overall variation in support for parties, and variation in support for parties with respect to key ideological dimensions and issues. Using quantitative data on all parliamentary and presidential elections held in Bulgaria, Czechia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Poland, it analyzes the aggregate patterns of divergence and convergence between diaspora and origin-country electorates from the last pre-EU-accession election onward. The analysis shows that diaspora voters are less likely to turn out in elections, but that those who do vote make choices which are legible with respect to origin-country political dynamics and relatively consistent over time, with no evidence of divergence or convergence. The chapter concludes by identifying three important issues to be investigated at the individual level: the impact of election laws and infrastructure on propensity to participate in elections, the relative importance of migration experiences and socio-demographic factors in determining diaspora vote choices, and the impact of host-country society and politics on the behavior of diaspora voters.

Keywords Vote choice • Turnout • Ideology • Values

K. Szulecki et al., *External Voting*, Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-19246-3_3

The vast extent of migration following the accession of countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to the European Union after 2004 has potentially significant political implications. On the one hand, with electoral turnout in countries of the region already significantly lower than elsewhere (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), 2022), the outcomes of domestic elections may be distorted by the abstention—whether enforced by law or by inconvenience—of a large cohort of voters some of whom might otherwise have cast a vote. On the other hand, those who do cast a vote overseas may cast that vote differently, with exposure to alternative sets of values and political contexts in their country of residence influencing their political choices back home. Their choices may also be influenced by the different contexts within which their votes are collected, counted, and translated into seats.

While some migrating EU citizens may choose to naturalize in their country of residence, EU freedom of movement means that there is little incentive for them to do so. With votes in elections to the European Parliament cast in the country of residence, external voting in countries of origin is in many cases the only means these migrants have to express political preferences on a national level. Yet migrant voting behavior remains understudied. Despite much recent interest in democratic backsliding, populism, and illiberalism and the consequences of these phenomena for party competition in the region and beyond (see Vachudova, 2021, for a comprehensive overview, and Buzogány, 2017, and Pirro & Stanley, 2022, for in-depth studies of the key cases of Hungary and Poland), there has been a little empirical study of the political impact of outward migration (although see Dancygier et al., 2022) and transnational political remittances (although see Erdal et al., 2022).

This partly stems from a lack of data. While qualitative studies of the motivations and preferences of voters are feasible, large-*n* surveys of the kind that would yield data that can be directly compared with national-level election studies are logistically challenging and expensive to conduct among diaspora communities, particularly if probability samples are required.

However, the data we *do* have at our disposal—the results of voting in electoral commissions set up outside country-of-origin borders—remain underutilized. Most comparative research on external voting to date has focused on turnout (Burgess & Tyburski, 2020; Ciornei & Østergaard-Nielsen, 2020), with studies of the actual results of external voting focusing primarily on non-European democracies (Lafleur & Sánchez-Domínguez, 2015).

External voting results are neither a perfect nor a complete indicator of diaspora political preferences, and there are obvious limits on what can be achieved with aggregate-level data, but comparing the results of voting among diaspora communities with the choices made by their origin-country counterparts can reveal patterns that are substantively informative in their own right, and which generate further research questions and hypotheses that may be tested at the individual level.

In this chapter, we compare the post-enlargement external voting of CEE diasporas in Western Europe with voting patterns observed at the domestic level, focusing on turnout, different levels of support for parties in general, and different levels of support for parties with respect to key ideological dimensions and issues. To carry out these analyses, we use external voting data gathered by the authors on all parliamentary and—where applicable—presidential elections held in Bulgaria, Czechia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania from the election prior to EU accession in each country until April 2021. These six countries were selected on the basis of their high levels of outward migration and because external voting is potentially politically significant due to the number of votes cast or the symbolic importance of outward migration in domestic political discourse. External voting data for these countries' elections was collected from 15 Western European countries: 12 EU member states (including the United Kingdom), plus Norway, Iceland, and Switzerland.

Following a brief description of the political contexts of the six origin countries, we describe the data and methods of analysis and then present the results of analyses regarding turnout, overall divergence, or convergence in voting behavior, and ideology-specific divergence or convergence.

The Political Contexts of the Countries of Origin

Diaspora and origin-country voters alike choose from the same menu. The six countries in this analysis have different types of party system and varying levels of party system "closure" (Casal Bértoa & Enyedi, 2021, pp. 34–35), but all offer a reasonably legible set of choices to their electorates. The five countries which hold direct presidential elections also offer broad slates of candidates. While the main purpose of this chapter is to analyze the differences between the choices of diaspora and origin-country voters, a brief contextualization of the circumstances in which those choices are made will help elucidate what follows.

Bulgaria

For the first decade of post-communist transition, Bulgarian politics was structured in accordance with a divide between an ex-communist left and anti-communist right. After 2001 this gave way to a period of political instability, with nationalist and populist movements and parties coming to the fore, and the role of ideological differences downplayed amid a focus on the issues of corruption and crime. Karasimeonov (2019, p. 13) characterizes Bulgarian parties as "predominantly parties of power" which exploit their access to power for clientelistic purposes. Between 2009 and 2021 the political scene was dominated by the center-right Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB), but in 2021 Bulgarian politics entered a period of significant ferment, with three parliamentary elections during that year amid the refusal of increasingly popular challenger parties to cooperate with parties of the establishment. Amid these changes, the office of president has remained relatively stable, with successive incumbents emerging from major political parties until 2016, when current incumbent Rumen Radev, an independent, was elected to his first term.

Outward migration is a phenomenon of increasing significance, with the proportion of Bulgarian citizens of working age who are residents in another EU country increasing from 6.0% of their home-country resident population in 2010 to 10.3% in 2020.

Czechia

Following the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992, the Czech party system offered a broad spectrum of ideological options from extreme left to extreme right. The party system was initially characterized by divides over economic issues, with the right-wing Civic Democratic Party (ODS) and the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) as the main points of orientation. While the party system remained open to the emergence of new formations, this dynamic remained dominant until 2010, after which the erosion of bipolarity between 2010 and 2013 (Balík & Hloušek, 2016) saw the emergence of a variety of populist forces from across the political spectrum, in particular billionaire Andrej Babiš's Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO). This reshaped the ideological complexion of the party system, with corruption in particular becoming an issue of key

importance. Prior to 2013, the president was elected by parliament, with former dissident Václav Havel and then ODS leader and former prime minister Václav Klaus holding the post for two five-year terms apiece. Former ČSSD prime minister Miloš Zeman then won two successive elections in 2013 and 2018.

Czechia has the lowest rate of outward EU migration among the CEE countries that joined after 2004. In 2010, the proportion of Czech citizens resident in another EU country was only 1% of the home-country resident population, and there was barely any increase by 2020, when the figure stood at 1.1%.

Latvia

Latvian party politics has been marked by extreme multipartyism, which has led to a plethora of short-lived governments. Nevertheless, legible political cleavages can be discerned beneath the unstable surface. Auers (2015, pp. 110–111) identifies a socio-economic dimension relating to the nature and pace of post-1989 market reforms which has declined in relevance, while an ethnic cleavage rooted in post-Soviet policies over language and citizenship has persisted, and a political value divide has emerged between corruption-fighters and oligarchs.

In 2010, the proportion of Latvian citizens resident in other EU countries was 2.6% of the home-country resident population. This rose to 5.9% by 2020.

Lithuania

Lithuanian party politics has been marked by a predominant left-right divide that shifted from a "regime-oriented conflict" over the Soviet past in the 1990s to a classic socio-economic divide in more recent years (Duvold & Jurkynas, 2013, pp. 137–138). While populist parties made significant gains after 2000, these parties did not fundamentally disrupt the underlying stability of the political system, with almost all ruling coalitions led by representatives of one side or the other of the left-right divide. This pattern was disrupted in 2016, when the agrarian Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union (LVŽS), which convincingly won the parliamentary elections in 2016, capitalized on voters' disenchantment with established parties. Four years later, the conservative-liberal Homeland

Union—Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS–LKD)—returned to power, but the poor showing of the Social Democratic Party of Lithuania (LSDP) raised some uncertainty as to whether the left-right divide would persist as the most significant point of ideological orientation in Lithuanian politics. With the exception of Rolandas Paksas, impeached and removed from office in 2004, the office of president has been marked by relative stability, with two incumbents, Valdas Adamkus and Dalia Grybauskaitė, serving two five-year terms each.

In 2010, the proportion of Lithuanian citizens resident in other EU countries was 4.0% of the home-country resident population. By 2020, this had risen to 6.5%.

Poland

The first decade of post-transition party politics in Poland revolved around the post-communist divide between the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), the successor party to the communists, and an ideologically eclectic variety of parties drawn largely from the ranks of the former opposition. After the watershed election of 2001, in which three parties contesting the legitimacy of Poland's transition settlement entered parliament, the party system transformed into one defined by a divide between nativism, populism, and "solidaristic" economic policy on the one hand and a relatively socially progressive and pro-free market orientation on the other (Stanley, 2018, pp. 20–22). While the party system remained open to newcomers, particularly in ideological niches insufficiently catered for by existing parties, the main line of competition ran between the conservative-liberal Civic Platform (PO), the main party of government from 2007 to 2015, and the populist-nationalist Law and Justice party, which following its victory in 2015 set Poland on a course of democratic backsliding that has taken it from one of the front-runners of post-communist democratization to one of the progenitors of a new form of electoral autocracy. Since the victory of SLD candidate Aleksander Kwaśniewski in 1995, successive presidents have emerged from one of the major parties of the day, with the incumbent usually ideologically congruent with the current government.

While Poland has seen the largest wave of outward EU migration in absolute terms, a relatively small proportion of the working-age population has emigrated. In 2010 this stood at 2.7% of the home-country resident population, rising to 4.1% in 2020.

Romania

The violent end to communism in 1989 led to a gradual transition over the next decade that was dominated by the competition between forces associated with the old regime. The urban/rural divide, which contained a significant socio-economic component, was a key determinant of voting behavior as transition reforms generated significant cohorts of economic losers (Crowther & Suciu, 2013, p. 376). By the second decade of transition, the influence of former communists had waned to the extent that a new divide emerged that focused on issues of clientelism and corruption, the battle against which would play a defining role in Romanian politics over the subsequent two decades, informing the creation of formal coalitions and informal alliances. During this period, the presidency was also the locus of related disputes, with two-term president Traian Băsescu twice suspended and subjected to impeachment proceedings over alleged abuses of power.

In relative terms, Romania has seen by far the largest migrant exodus among the countries analyzed here. Only three years after accession, the proportion of EU mobile Romanian citizens was 11.5% of the number of home-country resident population, and this rose dramatically to 18.6% in 2020.

Data and Methods

The analyses in this chapter use two sources of data. The first is the aforementioned dataset on diaspora voting, which supplies information on electoral turnout and aggregate votes cast for political parties among both diaspora and origin-country communities. This is supplemented with data on the ideological placements of parties from the V-Party expert survey (Lindberg et al., 2022), as described below.

For the analysis of turnout, we simply calculate the proportion of voters participating at a given election as a percentage of all voters participating in that election. The remaining analyses require more detailed explanation. The basic unit of observation in our analyses is the percentage share of the vote cast for individual parties in each of the country of residence, per country of origin. For the analysis of how diaspora voting converges with or diverges from origin-country voting, we use the Pedersen index (Pedersen, 1979) to derive a measure of disparity between diaspora and origin-country electorates. This index was originally developed to measure

electoral volatility in terms of the net change in party electorates between consecutive elections. We use it instead to compare the differences between votes cast for parties by origin-country voters and votes cast by diaspora voters. The index consists of values between 0, where there is no difference between origin-country and diaspora voters, and a theoretical limit of 100 (in practice, the variable rarely exceeds 60).

For the analysis of how diaspora voting converges with or diverges from origin-country voting in terms of ideology, we derive an ideological "center of gravity" for both diaspora and origin-country voters. This measure is calculated as a weighted mean of party positions on a given ideological dimension, where the weight in question is the party's level of support. This measure thus combines information about the ideological positions of parties (which are the same in each origin-country/diaspora community dyad) with measures of support for parties (which differ in each origin-country/diaspora community dyad). This gives us a composite measure of the extent to which origin-country and diaspora electorates favor parties with particular profiles on each of the ideological dimensions.

The V-Party data provide a wide variety of ideological dimensions and specific issues. The 12 we selected for our analyses are intended to cover both broad and specific questions about the nature of contemporary democratic systems, socio-cultural values, and economic distribution. They are as follows:

- Pluralism[1] (the extent to which a party shows a commitment to democratic norms prior to elections)
- Populism (the extent to which party representatives use populist rhetoric)
- Economic left-right (the extent to which a party supports or rejects an active and redistributive role for government in the economy)
- LGBT rights (the extent to which a party supports or opposes social equality for the LGBT community)
- Gender equality (the extent to which a party has women in national-level leadership positions)
- Equal participation of women (the extent to which a party supports or opposes equal participation of women in the labor market)

[1] This variable is the reverse-coded version of the original V-Party measure of anti-pluralism.

- Reference to religious principles (the extent to which a party invokes God, religion, or sacred texts to justify its positions)
- Immigration (the extent to which a party supports or opposes immigration into the country)
- Cultural superiority (the extent to which a party leadership promotes the cultural superiority of a specific social group or the nation as a whole)
- Welfare (the extent to which a party prefers means-tested welfare policies, which are based on the application of resource-based criteria for recipient eligibility, over universalistic welfare policies, where no such criteria are applied)
- Clientelism (the extent to which a party provides targeted goods and benefits to keep and gain votes)
- GAL/TAN[2] (the extent to which a party's ideological profile is green, alternative, and libertarian compared with traditionalist, authoritarian, and nationalist)

Those variables not already bounded by 0 and 1 were standardized to that range for ease of interpretation.

These aggregate disparity and ideological position variables were used as dependent variables in a series of Bayesian ordinary least squares regression models. There are three independent variables in these models. The first is a measure of time, operationalized as an index variable with a lower bound of zero, in which the unit is year, and the starting point is the election preceding a given country's accession to the European Union. The squared term of this variable was also included to capture nonlinear change over time. The second independent variable is a set of dummy variables for countries hosting diaspora communities, and the third is a set

[2] This "new politics" (Hooghe et al., 2002) dimension is commonly used in the literature on European party politics, but is not measured directly in the V-Party dataset. To approximate it, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (RMSEA = 0.017; CFI = 1.000; TLI = 0.999) of variables deductively selected for their relevance to the dimension: support for social equality for the LGBT community, support for equal participation of women in the labor market, promotion of the cultural superiority of a specific social group or the nation as a whole, and invoking God, religion, or sacred/religious texts to justify parties' positions, and standardized the resulting factor scores to a 0–1 scale. The measure strongly correlates (0.881) with the GALTAN measures collected for some of our parties of interest by the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al., 2022), suggesting that it adequately reproduces the essence of that dimension despite the absence of questions on environmental policies.

of dummy variables for the country of origin. As the aim is to ascertain how trends over time vary across origin-country and diaspora contexts, the independent variables interacted with each other.

The use of models with dummy variables and interactions means that an interpretation of the results of our analysis cannot be undertaken on the basis of regression tables, as their coefficients relate to an arbitrary reference category. Furthermore, the length of these tables precludes their publication. They are available from the authors on request. Instead, we rely on marginal effects plots of our quantities of interest, which allow us to identify the extent to which general and ideological disparities vary over time, and whether there are statistically significant differences between diaspora electorates and their origin-country counterparts.

Results of the Analysis

Turnout Patterns and Change Over Time

Patterns of turnout at parliamentary and the first round of presidential elections are presented in Fig. 3.1, which plots turnout in each diaspora as a percentage of all votes cast in the given election. Each trend line starts at the election prior to EU accession and ends at the most recent election for which data were collected.

A general trend of rising turnout is evident, although not in all origin-country cases and not at the same rate. In some cases, such as parliamentary elections in Latvia and Poland, the trend rises relatively smoothly over time, while in others, for example, Bulgaria, it fluctuates. However, with the exception of parliamentary elections in Czechia, there is at least some discernible increase from the initial position.

The rise in general trends can be explained in part by the increasing size of CEE diaspora communities in the countries of Western Europe. Before accession to the EU, migrant communities had a much smaller presence, and in some cases only a negligible one. Following accession, CEE migrants to Western Europe constituted a significant proportion of the citizenry of their respective countries of origin. However, the fluctuation in these trends suggests that rising turnout is not necessarily attributable simply to rising numbers of migrants. If it were, we would expect a rise in diaspora turnout proportional to the increase in migration and the increasing enfranchisement of those who migrated as children or were born abroad.

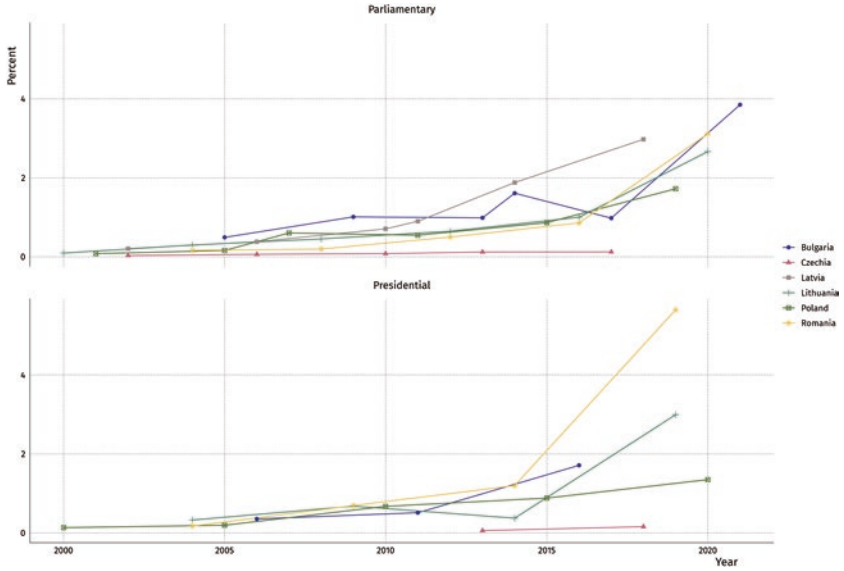

Fig. 3.1 Diaspora turnout as percentage of overall turnout

The Romanian presidential elections of 2019, where the proportion of diaspora voters participating in the first round abruptly jumped from around 1% of all voters in 2014 to over 5%, is an exemplary case of how factors other than the growth of migrant communities may influence turnout. Following criticism of the hitherto inadequate infrastructure for administering elections abroad, the Romanian authorities introduced reforms that substantially facilitated participation by diaspora voters, including a three-day voting period and longer opening hours for polling stations (Comai, 2019). With diaspora communities also galvanized by political factors (the vast majority of votes abroad were cast for liberal incumbent Klaus Iohannis), turnout in the second round was even higher, at over 10% of all votes cast. On the other hand, while turnout in the 2020 parliamentary elections also increased, it did so by a smaller margin. One possible explanation for this is that while diaspora voters participate in presidential elections on the same basis as origin-country voters, translating diaspora votes into parliamentary seats is a more complex process that often renders the link between vote and outcome less legible to the voter.

On the other hand, it should be noted that across the five origin countries which hold direct presidential elections (Latvia's president is elected by parliament), the diaspora turnout is not consistently higher than in parliamentary elections, suggesting that the more "direct" nature of the election is not a decisive factor. While turnout is generally rising, it is impossible to identify a single factor driving this. Rather, it appears to be a function of the number of migrants, the socio-demographic profile of the diaspora communities, the extent and character of the polling infrastructure, and the nature of the political contest.

Overall Disparity

Figure 3.2 shows the marginal effect of time on disparity, conditional on origin country and diaspora community. Each of the black points corresponds to a single origin-country/diaspora-community dyad. The trend line shows the median disparity, and the dark-to-light shaded areas correspond to credible intervals of 0.95, 0.80, and 0.50, respectively. Each of the subplots shows three essential pieces of information. The first is the

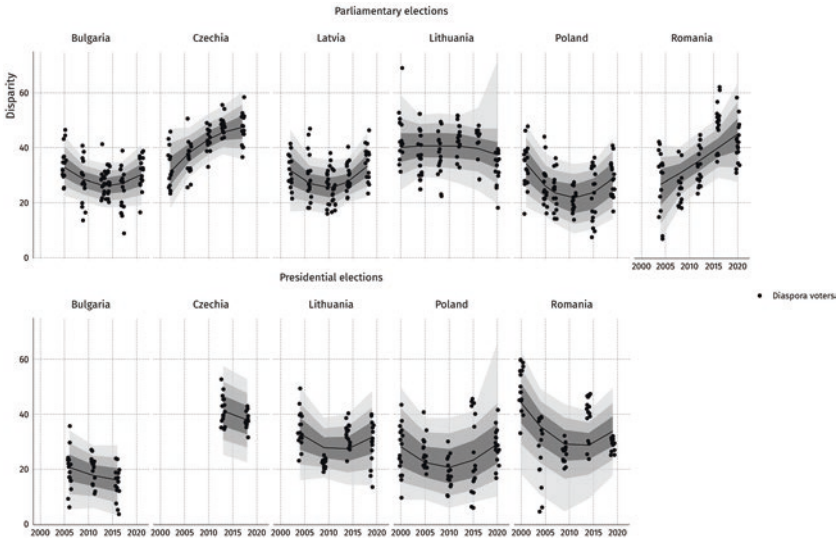

Fig. 3.2 Disparities between country of origin and diasporas

extent to which diaspora communities as a whole diverge from origin-country voters, indicated by the level of disparity (as presented on the y-axis), and the credible intervals for the median measure. The second is the extent to which diaspora communities vary, as shown by the dispersal of the black points. The third is the extent to which disparity changes over time.

Parliamentary Elections

As shown in the topmost line of subplots in Fig. 3.2, there is clear variance in the extent to which diaspora communities differ from non-diaspora ones. The plotted points are often widely dispersed, indicating that there are significant differences between diaspora communities with respect to the extent of disparity. Yet some clear trends can be identified.

In the cases of Bulgaria, Latvia, and Poland, an initial post-accession convergence was followed by divergence. Disparity values among Bulgarian diaspora communities decreased on average between the last pre-accession election in 2005 to the election of 2014, meaning that the votes of diaspora Bulgarians began to resemble more clearly those of origin-country voters. However, by the first of the three parliamentary elections Bulgaria held in 2021, the level of disparity had clearly increased again. There is a similar pattern in the case of Latvia, where the average disparity fell between 2002 and 2010, only to rise again by 2018. In Poland, this trend was more pronounced: in 2001, the disparity level stood at 35, falling to just over 20 in 2011, only to rise again to around 30 by 2019.

Czech and Romanian diasporas show a pattern of increase over time. In the case of Czechia, disparity was on average around 30 in the last pre-accession election in 2002. With each successive election, disparity increased so that by 2017 average disparity was around 45. In Romania, this figure rose from around 25 in 2004 to over 40 in 2020, although there was considerably more variation than in the Czech case.

Lithuania is the only case in which there has been no increase over time, but the level of disparity is high. Between the last pre-accession election of 2000 and the 2016 election, average disparity figures remained stable at around 40. Only in the most recent election, held in 2020, did that average change, falling slightly to just under 40.

Presidential Elections

There is also considerable variation in disparity when it comes to presidential elections.[3] In the case of Bulgaria, average disparity fell from 20 in 2006 to around 16 in 2016. In Lithuania, Poland, and Romania, there was a pattern of initial decrease in disparity followed by an increase. In 2004, the disparity between diaspora voters and origin-country voters in Lithuania was over 30. This fell to around 26 in 2009 and 2014, only to rise again to over 30 in 2019. In Poland, there have been particularly large variations in levels of disparity between specific diaspora communities. On average, disparity fell from just under 30 in 2000 to 20 in 2010, mirroring the convergence observed with respect to parliamentary elections over the same period, only to rise again to 30 by 2020. Meanwhile, in Romania, disparity fell from over 40 in 2000 to less than 30 from 2009 onward.

There are only two points of comparison in the case of Czechia, which started electing its president in 2013. In both the 2013 and 2018 elections, there was a high level of disparity, at around 40. No countries have shown consistent election-on-election increases in disparity.

Ideological Disparity

Figures 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 present measures of ideological divergence and convergence. These plots show the marginal effect of time on ideological position, conditional on origin country and diaspora community. In this case, the black points show the weighted mean for each diaspora community per origin country on the relevant issue or dimension, with the black line showing the median and the shaded areas credible intervals as detailed above. The red points are the corresponding weighted means for origin-country voters. The red line does not have any substantive meaning but connects the red points for clarity. If the red points fall outside the credible intervals, then it can be concluded that there is at least a 95% probability of ideological disparity between the aggregate vote choices of a country's diaspora and its domestic voters on a given ideological issue or dimension.

Pluralism

Overall, diaspora voters are more inclined than their origin-country counterparts to vote for parties that support the principle of pluralism. However,

[3] Latvia does not appear in this analysis as it does not hold direct elections for the presidency.

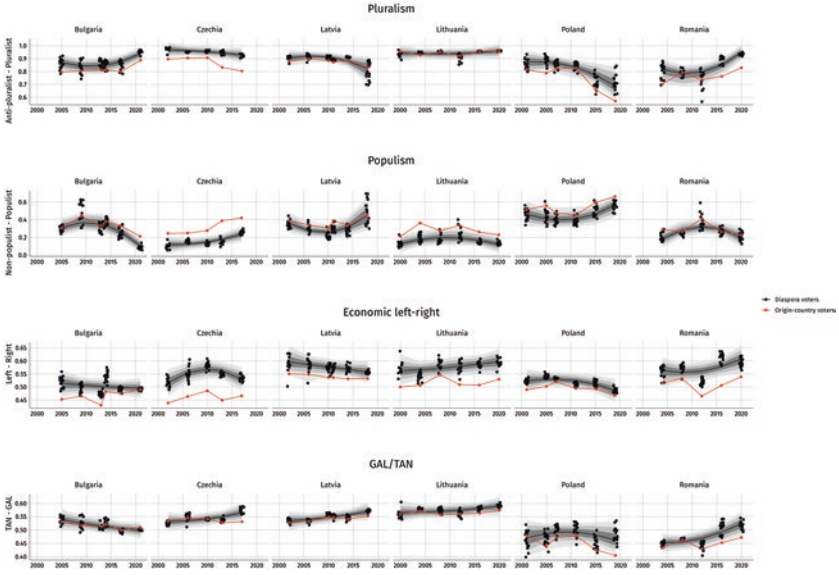

Fig. 3.3 Ideological disparities between diaspora and origin-country voters: pluralism, populism, economic left-right, and GAL/TAN

this varies by country. While in Latvia and Lithuania there is no statistically significant difference, in the remaining countries the ideological center of gravity for origin-country electorates is at least in some years significantly lower than the median of diaspora voters. The clearest difference can be seen in Czechia, where diaspora voters have been consistently more likely to vote for pro-pluralism parties, and in which the gap between the two sets of voters has increased in recent years. In the remaining countries, diaspora voters mirror origin-country voters, albeit imperfectly. In Bulgaria and Romania, voters at home and abroad have been more likely to opt for pluralist parties in recent years, but diaspora voters have been somewhat more likely to support these parties. In the case of Poland, support for pluralist parties has fallen, but to a greater extent among origin-country voters. While both sets of voters were equally likely to vote for pluralists in 2011, by 2019 diaspora voters were more likely to support pluralist parties, even if—reflecting changes in ideological supply—the overall level of support for these parties had fallen.

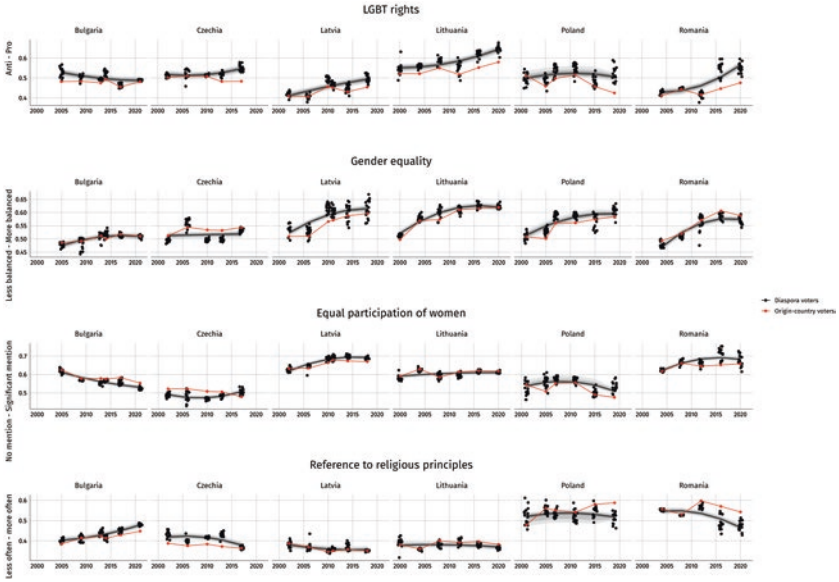

Fig. 3.4 Ideological disparities between diaspora and origin-country voters: LGBT rights, gender equality, equal participation of women, and reference to religious principles

Populism

Unsurprisingly, given the considerable conceptual overlap with pluralism, the opposite relationship can be seen in the case of populism, where most diaspora communities are less likely to support populist parties than their origin-country equivalents. Czechia again stands out for the most significant different on this issue dimension; while support for populists has grown in recent years among all voters, origin-country voters are significantly more likely to vote for such parties. In Bulgaria and Romania, support for populist parties initially increased, but in recent years has waned. Both diaspora and origin-country voters follow this trend, and—with the exception of the 2021 election in Bulgaria—there is no statistically significant difference between diaspora and origin-country voters. In Latvia, support for populist parties initially waned but has increased in recent years, with no significant differences between voters at home and abroad. In Lithuania, where levels of support for populists remained low, diaspora voters were less likely to support such parties. In Poland, where support

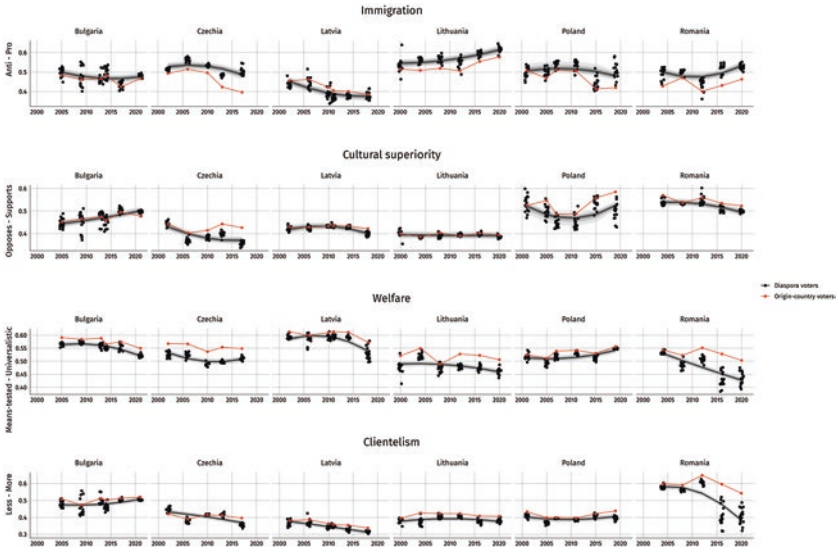

Fig. 3.5 Ideological disparities between diaspora and origin-country voters: immigration, cultural superiority, welfare, and clientelism

for populists remained relatively high, most diaspora communities were less likely to support such parties.

Economic Left-Right

Diaspora voters from Czechia stand out in particular on this dimension, being significantly more likely to support parties with a more right-wing economic profile. This is also the case to a somewhat lesser extent in Lithuania and Romania. While origin-country voters in Bulgaria were initially more likely than many diaspora communities to support more economically left-wing parties, there has been convergence in recent years, and in 2021 there was no difference between origin-country and diaspora voters on this question. In Latvia and Poland, meanwhile, diaspora voters were more likely than many origin-country voters to vote for right-wing parties, but the difference was increasingly negligible.

GAL/TAN

There are no significant differences on the GAL/TAN dimension in the cases of Bulgaria, Latvia, and Lithuania, with diaspora and origin-country

voters alike voting for successively more TAN parties in Bulgaria and successively more GAL parties in Latvia and Lithuania. In Czechia and Romania, there has been an ideological divergence on this dimension; while initially there was no difference among voters, in recent elections diaspora voters have been more likely to vote for GAL parties. In the case of Poland, there was no statistically significant difference from 2001 to 2011, but following the turn of the Law and Justice government toward more conservative socio-cultural positions from 2015 onward, a gap emerged on this dimension, with origin-country voters significantly more likely to opt for more TAN parties.

LGBT Rights

Diaspora communities are generally more likely to vote for parties with a more positive approach to LGBT rights. In Bulgaria, where support for such parties has slightly declined in recent years, the difference is not substantial, and in the most recent election, there was no difference between diaspora and origin-country voters. In Latvia and Lithuania, support for pro-LGBT-rights parties has increased in recent years, but over the last decade, origin-country parties have been significantly less likely than diaspora voters to vote for such parties. The remaining countries have seen a divergence on this question. Until 2010, diaspora voters from Czechia were as likely as their origin-country counterparts to vote for parties with a more pro-LGBT-rights orientation. Since then, the two groups of voters have diverged, with diaspora voters now significantly more likely to vote for such parties. In Romania, such a separation occurred in 2012, since when diaspora voters, while supporting pro-LGBT-rights parties to differing extents, have been more likely on average in recent years to support these parties. In Poland there has been relatively little change in support for pro-LGBT-rights parties, but since 2011 diaspora and origin-country voters have increasingly diverged on this question. In the 2019 election, diaspora communities were substantially divided in their level of support for these parties, but in all cases, they were more likely than their origin-country counterparts to vote for them.

Gender Equality

In Bulgaria and Czechia, there has been little change over time in the average position of parties on this issue, and no consistent difference in the voting behavior of diaspora and origin-country voters. Elsewhere, parties have become, on average, more likely to have women in national-level

leadership positions. For the most part, diaspora and origin-country voters do not differ on average in their support for more gender-balanced parties. This is in large part attributable to the fact that there is considerable diversity in the positions of diaspora communities, particularly in the cases of Latvia and Poland.

Equal Participation of Women

There is also little difference between diaspora and origin-country voters on the question of whether women should be able to participate equally in the workforce. This is perhaps due to the relatively low salience of this issue. With the exception of Bulgaria, where parties have become less likely to mention this issue over time, there has been little change in the extent to which parties mention this issue. At times, origin-country voters in Bulgaria and Czechia have been slightly more likely than diaspora voters to vote for parties who mention this issue, while the reverse has been the case in Poland and Romania, but for the most part there are no significant differences.

Reference to Religious Principles

There are clear differences between origin countries both in the extent to which religious principles are important aspects of political discourse and the extent to which those principles matter to origin-country and diaspora voters alike. In Czechia, the importance of religious principles to parties has declined over the period of analysis, and while in previous years diaspora voters were slightly more likely than origin-country voters to vote for parties espousing such principles, in the most recent election there was no difference. Romania has also seen a decline in the importance of this issue, but in this case diaspora communities—although divided on the question—are significantly less likely than origin-country voters to support such parties. In the case of Poland, religious principles have remained an important element of party-political discourse throughout the period of analysis. Prior to 2015, while diaspora communities were significantly divided in their support for parties prioritizing this issue, origin-country voters did not differ from the median diaspora community. Since then, diaspora voters have remained divided on the question, but significantly less likely than origin-country voters to support parties that make greater reference to religious principles. In Latvia and Lithuania, meanwhile, diaspora and origin-country voters do not vote differently on this question, and there has been no discernible change in the ideological profiles of parties over time, suggesting it is of negligible importance.

Immigration

In most cases, diaspora communities—migrants themselves—are more likely to vote for pro-immigration parties than their origin-country counterparts. The clearest exception to this is Latvia, where origin-country voters have been slightly more likely to vote for pro-immigration parties. In Bulgaria, the difference is minimal, but in the remaining countries there is a clear gap between the diaspora median and the positions of origin-country voters. In Lithuania parties have become on average more pro-immigration over time, and the choices of both diaspora voters and origin-country voters have tracked that increase. The same is true of Romania since 2012. However, in Czechia and Poland parties have become less positive about immigration in recent years. In Czechia, the choices of origin-country voters with respect to immigration were initially close to those of diaspora voters, but since 2014 a substantial gap has opened up, with the former much less likely than the latter to support pro-immigration parties. There has been a similar change in the case of Poland after 2015, although in this case there is significantly greater variation among diaspora communities, with some much more likely than others to vote for pro-immigration parties.

Cultural Superiority

There is also significant variation in the case of cultural superiority. In Latvia and Lithuania, there has been very little change over time in the average position of parties on this issue, with parties more likely to oppose narratives of cultural superiority than support them. There is no significant difference between the choices of diaspora and origin-country voters in both cases. While parties have become more likely to support narratives of cultural superiority in Bulgaria and somewhat less likely in Romania, the choices of diaspora voters do not diverge substantially from those of origin-country voters. However, in Czechia and Poland there are clearer differences. In Czechia, support for parties espousing narratives of cultural superiority has declined over the period among the diaspora, but origin-country voters were as likely to support such parties in 2018 as in 2002. In Poland, support for such narratives initially declined, only to increase again after 2015. While there is significant variation in the responses of diaspora communities to this question, origin-country voters are more likely to support parties which advance narratives of cultural superiority.

Welfare

In keeping with the more general preference for right-wing economic positions among the diaspora, those voting abroad are more likely to support parties whose welfare policies are based on means testing. Poland is a clear exception here; while the positions of parties have tended toward more universalistic welfare provision in recent years, the Polish diaspora is no less likely than its origin-country counterpart to support parties who take this position on welfare. Elsewhere, party positions have largely been moving in the direction of means-testing, with diaspora voters more likely to support parties which offer such a policy.

Clientelism

For the most part, there is very little difference between diaspora and origin-country voters with respect to their support for parties which practice clientelism. In Bulgaria the average party is more clientelistic than in Czechia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, but all voters, regardless of their migrant status, are equally likely to vote for such parties. Romania stands out for significant divergence on this issue. While in the last pre-accession election in 2004 and the first post-accession election in 2008 diaspora communities did not differ from origin-country voters, since then a large gap has opened up. While there is substantial variation in the degree to which diaspora voters are willing to support clientelistic parties, in all cases they are significantly less likely than origin-country voters to give such parties their support.

This chapter has analyzed the aggregate voting behavior of diaspora voters, comparing them with voters in their country of origin. After examining levels of turnout since the last pre-accession elections in each country of origin, we then analyzed the disparities in aggregate party choice, looking both at overall levels of disparity and then at disparities of an ideological nature. The evidence marshaled in this chapter has shown that while post-EU-accession diaspora voters—facing as they do more onerous barriers to participation—are less likely to turn out in elections than their origin-country counterparts, their participation has not diminished with time, and those who *do* vote make choices that are legible with respect to origin-country political dynamics and relatively consistent over time.

Those choices can also be understood with recourse to many of the same established theories we apply to the study of voting behavior in more institutionally predictable and conventional origin-country settings. A recent study of Finnish migrant voters by Peltoniemi (2018) not only

emphasizes the particular importance in diaspora settings of easy access to infrastructure for voting but also points to predictors such as interest in politics, age, and education. Mügge et al. (2021, p. 416) show that socio-cultural attitudes and socio-economic status play a significant role in the vote choices of Turkish migrants in the Netherlands, albeit often in ways which are inflected by the host-country context. Such studies suggest that diaspora voting is driven by many of the same classic drivers of voting behavior that inform choices back home, but that idiosyncratic features of the diaspora experience must also be taken into consideration.

Aggregate-level data of the kind used in this chapter can identify persistent patterns of similarity and difference between diaspora and origin-country voters, and help generate research questions and hypotheses about the differences we observe. However, such data can only take us so far. Individual-level observational and experimental studies are needed if we are to delve beneath the broad tendencies identified here to understand more about what informs the distinct character of diaspora voting.

Where turnout is concerned, we observe that interventions to increase the density and accessibility of polling infrastructure have resulted in increases in turnout. This—allied with the general tendency for turnout to increase rather than decrease over time—suggests that there is a significant "latent" electorate among diaspora communities; that is, there are many who are willing to vote, but are dissuaded from doing so by the lack of adequate infrastructure for their participation. We therefore forward the hypothesis that decreasing the investment of time and effort required to participate in elections will significantly increase the probability that a diaspora voter turns out to vote.

The persistent—and in many cases relatively high—disparities between voting behavior among diaspora voters and their origin-country counterparts point to significant and persistent structural differences between these two groups that are relatively resistant to change. One likely source of these differences is socio-demographic composition. While the nature of socio-demographic differences is likely to vary from diaspora to diaspora, and from origin country to origin country, the persistence of the disparities we observe despite often quite substantial changes in the ideological menu of parties on the supply side leads us to hypothesize that the most significant predictor of diaspora/origin-country voting disparities is socio-demographic rather than ideological in character.

That is not to say that ideology does not matter. Clearly, as our analyses have shown, there are some significant differences between origin-country

and diaspora electorates in terms of the ideological nature of the parties they are willing to support. The clearest and most consistent differences concern overall economic orientation and attitudes to welfare. However, it is not clear whether this outcome reflects socio-demographic differences of the kind identified above, or distinct diaspora experiences. One hypothesis is that the greater propensity for diaspora communities to support more economically right-wing parties can be explained by the overrepresentation in those communities of socio-demographic groups more likely to cast such votes. Alternatively, it may be hypothesized that this difference reflects a lower sense of communal obligation to society as a whole, stemming from a migration-induced sense of remoteness from the origin-country community.

Finally, we also advocate the over-time exploration of the impact of host-country society and politics on the behavior of diaspora voters. While this investigation has focused on aggregate patterns across Western European host countries as a whole, each data point is also a potentially different context in time and space, with the origin-country voting behavior of diaspora voters potentially influenced not only by origin-country considerations but also by the impact of their experiences as members of distinct diaspora communities in diverse contexts.

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CHAPTER 4

Migrant Perspectives on External Voting

Abstract This chapter explores migrants' perspectives on voting in country-of-origin elections and on participation in democratic politics in countries of origin in Central and East Europe. We build on 80 semi-structured interviews with migrants from Poland and Romania, living in Barcelona, Spain, and Oslo, Norway. The chapter offers an analysis of their thoughts on and experiences of practicing external voting, as well as choosing not to cast a ballot in any given election. The first part explores the reasons why migrants do—or do not—vote "back home," offering illustrations from our data, focusing on motivations for external voting, practicalities that impede or facilitate external voting, and discussing intersecting scales of motivation. These discussions are set within the context of migrants' broader motivations to engage in politics transnationally, and intimately connected with their reflections on the principled question of the democratic legitimacy of external voting. The second part of the chapter extends the view from external voting to migrants' own perspectives on transnational political engagement, including but not limited to external voting, as set within often transnational lifeworlds affected by both "here" and "there" in varying ways.

Keywords Migrants • Perspectives • Motivations • Transnational • Political engagement • Turnout

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This chapter explores migrants' perspectives on voting in country-of-origin elections. It follows directly on from what we presented in the previous chapter on the aggregate patterns of diaspora voting. In this chapter we draw on our interviews with migrants from Poland and Romania, living in Barcelona, Spain, and Oslo, Norway, to include their thoughts on and experiences of practicing external voting, as well as choosing not to cast a ballot in any given election. Through this, we will add illustrations to several of the patterns already discussed in the previous chapter, notably in relation to how migration impacts migrants' motivations to vote in country-of-origin elections, and in relation to affecting their views. These discussions are set within the context of migrants' broader motivations to engage in politics transnationally, and intimately connected with their reflections on the principled question of the democratic legitimacy of external voting.

These reflections are all situated within a context where migration impacts citizenship, where citizenship does not necessarily mean residence, where dual citizenship can entail residence in one country of citizenship and not the other, and where issues of membership and belonging, both formal and informal, crystalize in experiences of inclusion/exclusion, with implications for the nature and practice of democratic politics (Smith, 2007; Vink et al., 2019). The chapter focuses on migrants' own perspectives, foregrounding migrant agency in relation to the practice of citizenship rights—here in the form of electoral participation—as a complementary perspective to much research on emigration state's regulation of external voting (Collyer, 2014; Lafleur, 2011; Lesinska, 2018, 2019; Palop-Garcı´a & Pedroza, 2017; Pallister, 2020).

Through this, we address what the determinants and motivations for engaging in homeland politics are, in the context of Central and Eastern European migration within the EU in the early decades of the 2000s. The question of why migrants vote in elections in countries of origin necessitates answers at several scales. First, considering dimensions to do with the desire and opportunity to cast a vote in a given election as such. Second, exploring this as linked somehow to an interest in participating politically and specifically in democratic processes "back home," and third, as closely intertwined with personal approaches to the society of emigration, both at the level of identity and belonging, and in more practical terms, such as in relation to owning property, family considerations, as well as possible plans to return. We thus build on important scholarship on migration and social change in Central and Eastern Europe, foregrounding the issue of

external voting within this broader landscape (Drbohlav & Dzúrová, 2021; Garapich, 2016; Horváth & Anghel, 2009; White & Grabowska, 2019; White et al., 2018).

Here we also consider the relationship between voting in any given election—and the broader theme of engagement in homeland politics. Migrants might be politically engaged in their country of origin and in its societal development, but either might not have the right to vote there, depending on enfranchisement rules, or might not have the desire to vote in a particular election, despite having the right to do so, as a matter of political choice. Conversely, migrants might not be particularly politically interested or well-informed, yet desire to vote, as a matter of confirming membership as a non-resident citizen of a given polity. As such, knowing how many migrants vote from abroad, in itself can be telling—yet migrant voting may include a vast array of different types of motivations for doing so, which may point in contradictory directions (Szulecki et al., 2021).

Exploring our qualitative data, we shed light on how migrants describe, discuss, and reason around external voting and transnational political engagement. These migrant perspectives broaden the remit within which we seek to interpret and make sense of external voting as a practice in Central and Eastern Europe. Such an exploration underscores questions of how electoral participation can and should be understood in relation to the citizenship institution, and how the state (and society) of emigration relate to non-resident citizens, as members of the political community in a given nation-state (Erdal, 2016; Gamlen, 2019).

Our qualitative insights also reveal that the practicalities of being able to vote go far beyond rules of enfranchisement but relate heavily to the nitty-gritty aspects of implementation (Boccagni, 2011; Cristina et al., 2014). Such implementation impacts migrants who often live in far-flung diasporic contexts, with poorly staffed consular services in capital cities, often miles away from where particular migrants live.

Thus, in many cases the reasons why migrants vote, and why migrants *do not* vote, relate to the practicalities of casting a ballot in any given election: where, when, and how, notably including requirements for registration, timelines, and locations, when digitally solutions are not offered. Therefore, more principled overarching considerations, while important, must be tempered with very mundane issues (Szulecki et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, migrants' external voting should also be seen in relation to their life abroad overall—which could be assumed to have some impacts—whether in affecting political views, in relation to experiences of

acceptance or discrimination, or regarding whether voting in the country of settlement is possible and/or practiced too. Thus, migrant voting in country-of-origin elections is usefully explored in relation to the transnational social fields within which (many) migrants' lives unfold (Bell & Erdal, 2015; Levitt & Schiller, 2004). Furthermore, migrants' electoral participation in countries of origin is varyingly associated with the nature and extent of diaspora politics—in the context of a given country of origin, but also in relation to the specific country and place of residence abroad. This brings in a collective level of consideration, which may be significant in cases where emigrant political influence has mattered (Adamson, 2016; Kleist, 2008; Smith & Bakker, 2005).

Placing migrants within their context of emigration, both individually and collectively, allows for an exploration of diaspora politics dimensions of external voting, from a migrant rather than state of origin perspective (Koinova, 2021). Simultaneously a diaspora politics perspective also contributes to opening the space for what is often a critical view on relations between state and society in the country of origin itself, which clearly involves conflicts of interests and struggles over both resources and narratives—which may be transposed from country-of-origin to diaspora contexts or can take on independent dynamics in different diaspora locations (Brand, 2014; Brun & Van Hear, 2012; Orjuela, 2008).

Questions about migrants' voting in country of origin elections thus refer not only to politics "back home," but also to lives which are, to an extent, lived both "here" and "there," and by extension therefore also have an interface with issues to do with politics in contexts of immigration too (Chaudhary, 2018; Erdal, 2020; Finn, 2020). For migrants, this may relate to questions of where they see their future: returning to the country of origin, moving onward to further destinations, or aiming to settle for the long-term in the country of immigration. However, from a bird's-eye view, these are ultimately questions about how the citizenship institution is understood in modern-day European states, which are not only dealing with significant immigration—but also emigration. That is, in societies where populations are increasingly made up of non-citizens, whereas the citizenry of the nation-state is increasingly also constituted by non-residents. Arguably, faced with such empirical realities, an analytical view which adopts a transnational lens to the task of shedding further light on the determinants and motivations of external voting from migrants' perspectives has much to offer.

In this context, it is worth noting that our use of phrases such as voting "back home" and considerations around engagement in "homeland politics" do so from a conceptually and empirically justified basis, where migrants' sense of belonging, identities, and identifications, as well as both formal and informal membership(s), in political communities in the form of citizenship are recognized to be dynamic, (potentially) plural, and thus changeable over time (Antonsich & Matejskova, 2015; Harpaz & Mateos, 2019; Shaw, 2020). So, whereas for migrants from Poland or Romania, "back home" has a particular national reference point, this is not to say that this can be understood as in opposition to (potential) political engagements in a new "homeland"—simultaneously or in successive phases, often but not always reflecting longer-term migration experience. A transnational perspective allows us to acknowledge the different ways in which ties to countries of settlement, origin, and potentially other countries too may interact to shape an individual's motivations and choices (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013), as regards political engagement and voting externally in a particular context.

This chapter explores migrants' perspectives on participation in democratic politics in countries of origin in Central and East Europe. The first part seeks to make sense of the reasons why migrants do—or do not—vote "back home," offering illustrations from our data, focusing on motivations for external voting, practicalities that impede or facilitate external voting, and discussing intersecting scales of motivation. The second part of the chapter extends the view from external voting to migrants' own perspectives on transnational political engagement, including but not limited to external voting. Here we discuss migrants (often) transnational life worlds. Based on this, we ask, how does the experience of migration influence political views?

Making Sense of the Reasons Why Migrants Vote "Back Home"

The expanding body of knowledge on external voting, spanning electoral studies, political science, and migration studies, often with particular regional foci, already provides crucial insights of relevance to making sense of the reasons why migrants vote "back home" (Itzigsohn & Villacrés, 2008; Boccagni, 2011; Escobar et al., 2015; Lesinska, 2018; Mügge et al., 2021; Finn, 2020; Sevi et al., 2020).

Often, however, the elephant in the room remains unnamed and hence also not really explored: for most migrants do *not*, in fact, vote in country-of-origin elections (Hutcheson & Arrighi, 2015; Ciornei & Østergaard-Nielsen, 2020). And, this is the case even when they have the right to do so, and even when it is not practically impossible to actually do so. This picture is also true for the region we focus on this book.

Yet, existing research has only recently started to examine the determinants of external voting in relation specifically to electoral turnout and beyond single cases (Chaudhary, 2018; Ciornei & Østergaard-Nielsen, 2020; Lafleur & Sánchez-Domínguez, 2015; Pallister, 2020). Indeed, Fliess and Østergaard-Nielsen's (2021) review on extension of the voting rights to emigrants identifies four waves of research, on normative dimensions, patterns and trends, states motivations and the roles of political parties and other institutional actors. It also underscores the curiously absent focus on migrants' reactions and responses to enfranchisement. This book contributes to a fifth wave of research emerging, addressing this area.

From a micro level, often qualitatively based view, research that sheds light on the transnational political engagement of migrants, to a degree enters into questions of how migrants relate to state's diaspora policies, including those in the area of enfranchisement (Peltoniemi, 2018). Meanwhile, more emphasis has been placed on diaspora politics and political engagements in their own right (Koinova, 2009).

A largely distinct body of work considering diaspora roles in relation to development, typically geographically confined to countries in the Global South, remains in little dialogue with literature on external voting, albeit there are intersections as regards the political realm (e.g., Brand, 2014; Şahin-Mencütek & Erdoğan, 2016). Yet, there are important insights on political engagement and participation, which the study of external voting could merit from engaging further with (see e.g., Erdal, 2016; Horst, 2018; Faria, 2014; Tan et al., 2018; Yanasmayan & Kaşlı, 2019). A few studies have started to explore questions of electoral participation "here" and "there" (Chaudhary, 2018; Finn, 2020), indicating the need for further in-depth scrutiny of the connections between voting practices linked to citizenship and/or residence status in multiple nation-states.

Motivations for Voting in Country-of-Origin Elections

The question of migrants' motivations for external voting, drawing on what our interviewees themselves shared with us, needs to be unpacked, emphasizing not the migrant part, but the motivation to vote part. This relates both to electoral turnout specifically, and to motivation for political participation more broadly. These are interconnected, of course, yet also distinct. We cover the first dimension here, and the second in the next section of this chapter.

Focusing on motivations to vote, in the sense of electoral turnout, it is important to note that most of the mechanisms that apply, in general, are also relevant to migrants (Myatt, 2015; Riker & Ordeshook, 1968; Silberman & Durden, 1975; Settle & Abrams, 1976; Smets & van Ham, 2013).

Thus, people who have the right to vote in any given election are likely to reflect on questions such as:

- *Does my vote really matter?*
- *Who can I vote for, if none of the alternatives really fit my views?*
- *Who do I vote for, if I don't really trust any of the candidates to bring the political change I would see as best?*

These reflections are clearly articulated by Julia and Natalia, both Polish migrants interviewed in Oslo:

> We believe that our vote will not change anything. This is how 20 million people think, and nothing, in fact, ever changes. I always try to mobilize people. Because, really, once a year you can go out and do something for your fatherland. We live in times when it's important to pressure the politicians to make them feel they represent us and they are for us, not the other way round.
>
> (Julia, Polish migrant, in Oslo 5 years, in her 30s)

> Why? For various reasons, maybe they aren't interested in politics. Maybe they left and they want to leave it all behind them. Maybe they don't know how to vote. Maybe they don't have a mind for it. Maybe they are prioritizing other things. Maybe they just are not interested in politics. I also think that the people who do not vote in Poland are also the people who do not vote abroad. (Natalia, 35, Pole in Oslo)

(Natalia, Polish migrant, in Oslo 7 years, in her 30s)

Both these two women focus not only on migrants but also on similarities with non-migrants, in relation to motivations to vote, as Natalia underscores. Therefore, voting behaviors pre- and post-migration really also need to be understood jointly, and in the plural, recognizing that (to an extent), each single election is a separate event, which may or may not be participated in, and the considerations and dynamics driving voting or non-voting in each instance may vary.

Conversely, voting even in contexts where it is not compulsory is often discussed in terms of a "democratic duty"—and in newer democracies such as in Poland and Romania, an obligation one owes to those who helped fight for a democratic system, where elections actually do matter. Thus, reasons for voting, for migrants, as in general in democratic elections, focus on participating in democratic politics and contributing to a direction of change that one perceives as superior, as reflected in Julia's statement above.

Meanwhile, some interviewees also share very honest reflections about how they perceive elections, and the broader political "game" as Szymon (*all names used are pseudonyms*) refers to—this may be affected by being "away" abroad, but is also not uniquely linked to being away, but rather to being a regular average voter:

> Like I said I am interested in it but I am interested in it like I'm interested in a football match. I know the techniques, how to play, I can see that they played well or poorly, and how they could play differently, but I can't go into his place on the field, or even go to him and pass him the ball or block his opponent. I can't do that. But I am interested. But I can't influence this game.

(Szymon, Polish migrant, in Oslo 10 years, in his 40s)

Being socialized into particular ways of relating to electoral behavior does not change overnight due to migration. Thus, migrant or migration-specific answers to the question of why migrants vote and what the determinants of external voting are can be illusive and lead to significant blind-spots, whereas basic motivations for electoral participation that apply across populations may in fact be salient.

This said, being an emigrant, and voting "from abroad," does entail some peculiarities, which may also affect motivations for external voting in specific ways. Some of these motivations are well-summarized by Ion, a migrant from Romania whom we interviewed in Oslo:

> I think it is normal for the diaspora to have the right to vote because they are citizens of that country, but morally speaking I only think it is ok to vote if you are thinking of going back to your country or if you still have a family back there and you are thinking about their well-being. If you are completely separated from that society, then I don't understand why you want to keep influencing their lives if you don't want anything to do with that country anymore.
>
> (Ion, Romanian migrant, in Oslo 2 years, in his 30s)

Here, reflecting common considerations among the migrants we interviewed, Ion points to questions of membership and belonging, as key constituents of a motivation to vote, but also of viewing external voting as "morally" legitimate. Some migrants, however, like Sorina were of the very clear view that voting rights should be tied to residence:

> To be honest, I would take away the right to vote of any person who changes their residence once you change that you shouldn't be allowed to vote in the country you left. Why should we dictate the destiny of a country that we do not live in?
>
> (Sorina, Romanian migrant, in Oslo 4 years, in her 40s)

Migrants from both Poland and Romania discussed their reasoning around voting, often though not always, with the backdrop of the principled question of whether they should have the right to vote at all. For some this was a natural right—as a citizen, as a part of the nation, and as someone who sees themselves as part of the society of the origin country. Seeing arguments for and against was also common, and this ambiguity around the legitimacy of external voting is arguably a factor that can play a role in the motivation to vote too, as Kasia reflects on:

> Yes and no. Because the fact that we are not there should not authorize us to have an impact on what happens in our country. On the other hand, we never know what the future holds and we can return to our country anytime and we'd want to return to a county we like.

(Kasia, Polish migrant, in Barcelona 4 years, in her 30s)

Some migrants who felt less connected with the origin society, or simply reflected on the fact that they do not in practice live there, pay taxes there, use public services there, discussed their motivations to vote in relation to family ties and choosing to vote similarly to siblings or parents, lending support to their vote, to their visions of necessary political change, and thus balancing a certain ambiguity around voting.

For many migrants, not least in the context of intra-EU mobility, with relative ease of movement, the question of return remains open-ended—and many indicate that they plan to return at some point, for retirement, or to live "here" and "there," if not planning to return more permanently (Bygnes & Erdal, 2017; Drinkwater & Garapich, 2015; Friberg, 2012). Thus, the connection with the country of origin, at some level, and beyond family ties and holidays, is for many, kept alive—but with varying implications for motivations for—and actually choosing to—vote from abroad. Indeed, questions about return often function as a proxy for expressing continued membership and belonging, as much as about actual mobility and settlement preferences (Carling & Erdal, 2014).

The Practical Possibility of Casting the Vote in Elections

Drawing on our interview material, on the one hand we find that the salience of the practicalities around voting cannot be underestimated, if seeking to understand the determinants of external voting, and on the other hand, that disillusionment with the political programs on offer in certain elections, appear as an even more weighty explanation for low voter turn-out.

In this section we will therefore explore the types of nitty-gritty issues that matter to whether migrants in fact do cast a vote in a given election. As mentioned previously, there are different systems for voter registration, and when cumbersome, this in itself will reduce the number of migrants who are eligible to vote—despite their general enfranchisement. In the context of the two countries of origin which our interviewees referred to, registration procedures for external voting seem to have been streamlined, simplified, and digitalized in recent years, which means that few of our interviewees discussed the registration process as a current challenge, though it was noted that this is something that has to be done—and thus constitutes a practical threshold already.

A main topic of discussion in our interviews pertained to the location of polling stations, the distance to these, their opening hours, and capacity for processing people coming to cast their ballot. At the overarching level, among our interviewees, some Polish migrants had never experienced a queue, but most of those who had voted in at least one election in Barcelona or Oslo referred to queues of one or several hours. Among our Romanian interviewees, there are a lot of experiences of long queues in both Barcelona and in Oslo—of 3–9 hours of waiting. However, in both cities, the 2019 Presidential election was a turning point, with the number of polling stations and their preparedness experienced as adequate:

> [The 2019 presidential elections] were the first real elections, that is the first time when there was no queue, and I came to vote and solved everything in two minutes. Now, I do not claim to say that I have to necessarily vote in two minutes, but one thing is to wait for five, ten minutes, maybe half an hour, and another is to wait for ten hours and then stay out [of the polling station].
>
> (Madalin, Romanian migrant, in Barcelona 9 years, in his 30s)

The issue of queues is revealing of the nitty-gritty aspects of executing external voting in practice, often in contexts where migrants live in many places within a region or country, and many travel for a long time to bigger cities to be able to cast their ballot. The change in experiences among migrants from Romania, with the 2019 Presidential election, also points to the ways in which embassies and missions abroad, are not just executing, but in fact responsible for planning and organizing the details of how external voting actually happens.

Interestingly, the issue of queues to vote at polling stations was seen very differently. While some migrants were discouraged and left without voting, others felt a sense of encouragement and community with co-migrants and their country of origin—seeing the many people coming to vote:

> Maybe some people would be discouraged, I personally was more motivated when I saw what is happening there [the queues]
>
> (Lorena, Romanian migrant, in Oslo 11 years, in her 30s)

Among our interviewees, there were also varying views on what was a long distance to travel to the polling station—some migrants had

experienced driving for hours to the polling station, when not living in Barcelona or Oslo, both cities with one or more polling stations available for external voting in elections in Poland or Romania. One of our interviewees from Romania compares with the ease of voting back in Romania, and from this perspective, choosing to take out time to go and cast a ballot is something that requires more time and effort from migrants, than it does from the average citizen "back home":

> The section was really far from me, it would take me an hour of traveling to the voting station in Oslo.
>
> (Crina, Romanian migrant, in Oslo 8 years, in her 40s)

Another practical issue, which the Polish case illustrates well, relates to the role of diaspora votes in each election. In the Polish context, diaspora votes are included in one of the voting districts in Warsaw, which for some migrants can be off-putting. As Martyna discusses, whether this matters, depends on the individual voter, and whether they mainly see their vote in support of a political party—or more focusing on the individual representatives:

> That's also a problem, because voting here, I could only vote for representatives from Warsaw who I don't know, I don't have anything to do with them. I think that could be a negative factor, but it's not such a huge problem for me, because I decide on the party who I support […]. So, in my case, it's not a big problem, but I think that yes, that could dissuade people from smaller municipalities, from smaller towns, who are more closely tied to the local authorities.
>
> (Martyna, Polish migrant, in Oslo 4 years, in her 30s)

Nevertheless, the ways in which external votes work in the democratic system in each country, whether they are merged into a voting district, whether there are specific diaspora representatives elected, all these things will potentially also impact migrants' motivations to vote.

In our interviews, we also asked migrants about how external voting, in their view, should be made simpler. Our interlocutors' answers span the whole array of points of view—from the very practical issues on voting day at the polling station and mode of voting, through to questions of policies

that actually impact migrants directly being raised within the election campaigns, to the issue of political choice on offer as represented through the political parties with candidates standing for election:

> If it was possible to vote electronically more people would vote. Or if there was an exact time or date for different people. More people would be encouraged to go.
>
> (Olivia, Polish migrant, in Barcelona 4 years, in her 30s)
>
> If there were a topic related with migrant's taxes, or some political program that would encourage them to go back and would give any concrete solution. For sure, it would engage those groups, because it'd be something what concerns them directly.
>
> (Paulina, Polish migrant, in Barcelona 3 years, in her 30s)
>
> If I were to take my own case, the answer would probably be more options, I mean right now I am facing a choice between a neoliberal right wing and a corrupted left – I don't have what to vote for.
>
> (Teodora, Romanian migrant, in Barcelona 13 years, in her 30s)

Whereas in research, discussions on migrants' motivations to vote often focus on questions of democratic participation, or of citizenship, and matters of identity and belonging, we find that the mundane, everyday modes of actually casting the vote, merit further attention—across diverse empirical contexts. Meanwhile, among our interviewees, there is also a strong sense that if the right political choice is on offer, that will drive a motivation to vote, which will overcome practical challenges of the necessary time, transport, or other matters, as Michał states, reflecting not just on practicalities of the organization of voting—but on the practical aspects of remembering to go to vote:

> You know, but it wasn't any priority it seems. Because if it was very important then I definitely wouldn't have forgotten it. It seems to have been pushed down somewhere to a lower priority. So those are the facts.
>
> (Michał, Polish migrant, in Oslo 6 years, in his 30s)

Thus, perceived lack of political options to vote, and sense of importance of actually voting to each individual, appears to be a larger obstacle to increasing turn-out, even in the face of very real practical investments that migrants have to make in order to vote.

Interacting Scales of Motivation for External Voting

Emigrants' motivations for voting in country-of-origin elections, much as the practical modalities disabling or enabling such political engagement, can be sorted according to scales. Motivations of individual migrants depend on their previous (political) socialization, previous patterns of electoral behavior pre-migration, the individuals' interest in politics, their understanding and experience of what it means to be a citizen, and how they relate to this. It seems evident that motivations to cast a vote in elections "back home," appear to be intertwined also with future plans, notably about settlement, onward or return mobilities—thus tying more identity-based questions with practical dimensions of mobility, such as obtaining or managing properties, tax affairs, and pensions.

Thus, motivations at the individual level are already spanning the past, present, and future considerations, and demonstrate the ways in which political participation may intersect with different spheres of life, for migrants, as is the case for non-migrants. Meanwhile, the question of motivations for external voting is not only an individual matter. Rather, motivations to vote—or to refrain from doing so, whether as an active choice to disengage, or simply as the flip side of the lack of an active choice to vote—are also affected by collective dimensions. These can be connected to the individual's family and social network—in the country of origin as well as in the country of settlement. If the migrants' close others remain in the country of origin, motivations for involvement overall "there" are known to be higher; however, it remains unclear whether this can be associated with higher degrees of motivation to vote externally.

Emigration, External Voting, and Political Engagement

Political participation in the form of voting in elections is a particular mode of realizing citizenship rights and engaging in democracy. Meanwhile, voting is indeed set within the broader tapestry of democratic political participation, and in the case of emigrants—of transnational political participation (Waldinger, 2014; Koinova, 2021; Nowak & Nowosielski, 2022; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). As has been argued by researchers since the early 2000s, despite the increasing rates of enfranchisement of migrants and technological advances which plausibly should make external voting more feasible—there continues to be little evidence of mass mobilization among emigrants in the political sphere.

Rather transnational political action "is regularly undertaken by a small minority, is socially bounded across national borders, occurs in quite specific territorial jurisdictions, and appears to reproduce preexisting power asymmetries" (Guarnizo et al., 2003: 1211). But further to this, the statement that "a stable and significant transnational field of political action connecting immigrants with their countries of origin does exist" (ibid.: 1239) has been documented with case studies from around the world. Within this research, which foregrounds migrant political transnationalism—nonelectoral activities tend to gain most of the attention, however (Bauböck, 2003).

In the below we seek to contribute to discussions weaving migrant external voting together with their broader political engagements. We do so first by sketching out key connections between transnational lifeworlds and politics, as this emerges from our interviews. Next, we explore the ways in which the experience of migration may impact migrants' political views.

Transnational Lifeworlds and Politics

Among our 80 interviewees in Barcelona and Oslo, we found different transnational practices, some more frequent, other more sporadic, and variation in spheres—economic, social, cultural, political, and so on. As with most migrants who engage transnationally, in one way or another, our interviewees' transnational practices were focused around sustaining interpersonal ties with close others living in Poland or Romania, or in other locations. Transnational interactions were therefore much focused around family—but also networks of friends. We asked all of our interviewees about membership in political parties, trade unions, and other organizations—and found that a big majority of them neither were members in any such in Poland or Romania, nor in Spain or Norway—which we can take to reflect the reality which Guarnizo et al. (2003) describe—where transnational political engagement is rarely a mass issue, and indeed that this also reflects realities in the settlement context, as well as premigration socialization, to some degree at least.

Meanwhile, political transnational engagement does exist—which we also found reflected in discussions around voting. The most striking aspect of this was the fact that most of our interviewees both had voted at least once prior to leaving Poland and Romania—and also had voted at least once since coming to Barcelona and Oslo. This was a qualitative study, and

we make no claims to representative conclusions here. However, it underscores the fact that external voting is not something which migrants do, or do not do—each single election is an instance where many migrants consider whether to vote. In this sense, the realm of political engagement transnationally in the country of origin is something which figures on their horizons. Also, none of our 80 interviewees stated that they had voted in every election since becoming eligible to vote, thus a pattern of not voting in every election is a likely pre-migration pattern that is being continued, or at least that is a possibility that merits further investigation.

Our analysis of interviews revealed the many different reflections and considerations around voting in any given election. The more fundamental analytical (and methodological) insight, however, is that migrant political transnational engagement is not a binary variable—where some are—and others are not—participating. Neither in terms of "being" external voters nor in terms of "being" engaged in political transnationalism. Rather specific events, campaigns, elections, or periods of time can be scrutinized to better understand how migrants participate politically from afar.

Our interviewees spanned a continuum from those who had lived abroad for a long time to those who only had a few years' experience abroad and included those who had close family in Poland or Romania, as well as those whose closest family members were abroad. Thus, the ways in which transnational lifeworlds came into being, and mattered, for different of our interviewees, contrasted—and these types of different transnational modes of being arguably have an impact on the foundations on which transnational political engagement may be built. As we have argued elsewhere (Szulecki et al., 2021), non-linearity best describes the ways in which different aspects of migrant experience come together with their political engagements vis-á-vis the country of origin.

These findings feed into ongoing conversations about migrant transnationalism and integration, and questions of how priorities and time are divided and spent "here" and "there"—as well as both or nowhere (Chaudhary, 2018; Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Erdal, 2020; Finn, 2020). As Maria reflects on below, questions of attachment and belonging may have a quite direct bearing on political interest in the country of origin, which in his case leads him to argue for the legitimacy of external voting:

> I don't think it's a right you should lose as long as nationality keeps conditioning our life. As long as I'm a Romanian citizen and this has conse-

> quences at a level of… That I, as an immigrant, as long as there's a link to my nationality and my daily life, no matter how small, then I have a say. […] I think we should be able to vote in both places. From my point of view, both political lives affect me. Not only… And, on the other hand, it affects me because I have a family, friends in Romania. So, I'm not completely detached from what's going on there. And how my parents live affects me, too. So, yeah.
>
> (Maria, Romanian migrant, in Barcelona 18 years, in her 40s)

In our study, we deliberately did not seek to interview diaspora political activists, or diaspora politicians, and instead sought the perspectives of a mix of migrants from Poland and Romania, respectively, in Barcelona and Oslo, with a variety of levels of political interest and engagement, and types of views. However, clearly there are more politically engaged pockets of migrants, who participate in more systematic and structured ways transnationally in politics in Poland and in Romania. These individuals, "diaspora entrepreneurs" as Maria Koinova (2021) refers to them, can have an impact on extended diaspora networks in particular locations, and at times are closely connected with political elites in countries of origin, something we also saw was more present in the case of Romanians in Barcelona, than with our other interviewees.

The transnational lifeworlds of migrants, the ways in which diaspora politics may develop, and the links to transnational political participation are intimately tied with questions of membership—formally and informally—with both the state and the people in context of origin (Bauböck, 2003; Brubaker, 2010; Erdal, 2016). We found that among our Polish interviewees, national community membership was very closely tied to a sense of Polishness as an identity—which for many also supports the idea of having the right to vote from abroad. Meanwhile, the idea of Polishness as an identity is also something which is acknowledged to be independent of the voting rights, that is, even without voting rights, even without citizenship, that heritage and identity would be there. Thus, transnational political engagement is tied to sense of membership and belonging, which is usually but not necessarily linked to citizenship.

Whereas "the Polish homeland" for most of our interviewees, albeit in range of different ways, was a strong notion, this was not the same among Romanian migrants. The Romanian migrants we interviewed tie citizenship to ideas that are more civic and constitutional. Among Romanian

migrants, some express doubts over unlimited rights to vote from abroad, articulating a tension between permanent residence abroad, leading to a cutting of ties to the country of origin, as opposed to temporary residence abroad, where you are still really a member of the society of origin, and return is a definite part of the picture (or thought to be so, at least).

Romanian citizenship is less romanticized in terms of Romianness. Those that express doubts about whether diaspora should have the right to vote do so in terms of ownership of political issues and whether you have a plan to return or not. So, the question of not being so well connected, informed, and not having stakes in the future of Romania, if you do not want to return, are seen as arguments against diaspora voting rights in countries of origin.

Some migrants reflect on the balance of where you live your life, and the implications of that for your political engagements—as well as rights and citizenship status. Others remain more inconclusive or ambivalent about these issues, maintaining both "here" and "there" approach, as part of transnational social fields that exists, and certainly remain latent, if not massively politically engaged at any given moment in time.

Meanwhile, some of our interviewees had also participated in elections in Norway and Romania—mainly local level elections as only a couple of our interviewees had naturalized and had dual citizenship. For many interviewees, this might be a prospect later; however, for others, the practical need to naturalize was felt as low: what difference would naturalizing really make, in terms of rights? And, for some, the identity aspects of being a citizen also were a deterrent—given that the practical reasons to naturalize were perceived as limited, also making the question rather less important to consider.

Their reflections around being part of a transnational social field and political engagement "back home" were thus produced in a setting where there was a very clear sense of having both a "here" and a "there" as salient in their everyday lives. While several reflected on implications for the legitimacy of external voting rights, foregrounding residence as a consideration, there was little doubt that both societies—and thus to an extent polities—played a role for them, in more tangible ways, as well as relationally, and emotionally—whether most attention was geared toward country of origin or settlement.

Thus, when it comes to transnational lifeworlds and politics, from a migrant perspective, these are latent or actual interconnections—which may be experienced as more or less important, but at some level exist.

However, when it comes to the actual impact which transnational political participation has, in tangible or just visible ways, in origin contexts, this is often much more varying, and often driven by activists and "diaspora entrepreneurs," although the opportunity to vote externally does allow for migrants across the spectrum of levels of political engagement to also formally participate.

Meanwhile, political participation in contexts of settlement—or more specifically the desire to do so—appears to reflect the sense of anchoring that migrants have in their places of residence. This, however, is tempered by their types and levels of political socialization, pre-migration predominantly, but also during time spent abroad, where the practices and organizational structures within particular contexts matter. In our interviews, we found that considerations around political participation "here" and "there" were mainly discussed in relation to residence and to membership.

Interestingly, the implications of these two entry-points, in the context of transnational political engagements, appear to diverge. For residence, this was linked to questioning the legitimacy of the right to vote if you are not and will not be living in the country of origin, or underscoring the need for political engagement also in the place of settlement, if that is where the future is. That is, residence was by most of our interviewees, though not all, understood as singular—though possibly serial. By contrast, in relation to membership, the situation was different—many interviewees reflected on developing attachments, often of a very different nature, but with both contexts of origin and settlement. Based on these membership considerations, then, political participation both "here" and "there" appears justified and of interest.

How Does the Experience of Migration Influence Political Views?

A central question in research about external voting is not only how migrants differ or remain similar to the electorate "back home"—but also h*ow does the experience of migration influence political views and electoral preferences*? In our study, we approached this question from several angles, including asking migrants themselves about their perspectives on how migration affects their views, which is notably just one part of this bigger puzzle. We also asked migrants about their views on a number of more or less contentious political issues, in order to solicit reflections on these based on their experiences in the country of emigration as well as immigration.

Below we present some insights from our interviews about how migrants discussed gender equality, an issue on which there is arguably some variation between the contexts of origin and settlement—and a degree of contentiousness, perhaps especially in Poland. Through this, we show that migration does have a bearing on the development of people's political views; however, there are many factors which play a role here in terms of shaping the strength of this process, and its directionality on specific issues. We then turn to the question of how migration is perceived, by migrants, to be impacting their political views—which allows us to get insight into migrants' own reflections around these processes.

Questions of gender equality, and more specifically about equal opportunities for women and men, were something many of our interviewees shared thoughts about. Among our 80 interviewees, very few of the 40 in Oslo said they felt opportunities were more equal in Poland or Romania than in Norway. Among our 40 interviewees in Barcelona, more interviewees were uncertain about the balance, some suggesting the situation is better in Poland than in Spain, for instance.

Of course, what interviewees referred to when discussing gender equality and equal opportunities varied. However, overall, we found this issue to be less contentious among our interviewees, than both questions around sexual minorities and family values. As might be expected, we did have a few interviewees who interpreted questions of gender equality as part of a thematic package, connected to questions around "traditional family values," and whose point of departure was shaped by this:

> [Women in Spain] have abnormal behavior, […] they no longer have respect for family values.
>
> (Calin, Romanian migrant, in Barcelona 18 years, in his 40s)

However, a more prominent finding was the fact that across these themes and beyond, there was a high degree of non-linearity, in the sense that holding particular views on one issue need not entail holding what might be assumed to be corresponding views on other issues (see also Erdal et al., 2022). In other words, assumptions about clear "liberal" or "conservative" views did not become visible in the patterns of views expressed by our interviewees many times. And in particular in the case of some more "traditional" or "conservative" views. Meanwhile some of the (younger) and very clearly "liberal" interviewees had a pattern of more cross-cutting "liberal" views, albeit sometimes also with some nuances to

this picture. We found that different themes solicited reflections on views which were based on people's own lived experience often, and not mainly perhaps political rhetoric around them—thus a patchwork of opinions that taken together might appear disconnected, in fact made very good sense in our interviewee's own lives.

Our interviewees' discussion on gender equality centered around insufficient gender equality in many contexts in Poland and Romania. This referred for instance to stereotypes about women, expectations around working life, caring responsibilities, and responsibility for household tasks, but also questions about provision of welfare (paternal leave, abortion, contraception, birth care). As Aleksandra's statement shows, some migrants clearly reflect on the "here" and "there" realities they know, where this does not mean that "migration changes people's views"—but rather that lived experience impacts outlooks, just as that would be the case without migration, though chances of exposure to different things increases with migration:

> I think that men have a much better situation in Norway than in Poland because it's possible for them to have a better family life, and more responsibility for your family happiness, because in Poland this is all on the shoulders of women to make sure that children are happy and the husband is happy. Here it sometimes makes me really emotional to see fathers with three children on a walk, or two men who look like real professionals, of a high class, who are sitting in a cafe and drinking coffee with two small babies who they are feeding them milk, in their laps. These are the kinds of pictures that you wouldn't find in Poland.
>
> (Aleksandra, Polish migrant, in Oslo 5 years, in his 50s)

Some migrants, from both Poland and Romania, were quite vocal about what they perceived as need for dramatic change in their countries of origin as regards gender equality:

> No support is offered, I haven't heard anyone, and believe me, when I say that I'm reading the Romanian press almost daily, the first thing I do in the morning is browse the newspapers from Romania and from here. I didn't see anyone talking about equal rights. There are articles about equal pay, maybe they appeared in Romania, but it's not emphasized.
>
> (Lucian, Romanian migrant, in Barcelona 16 years, in his 40s)

However, many like Lucian did not tie very clear views about need for change in the country of origin directly to any particular action which they

themselves could perform, neither in relation to external voting nor in relation to other transnational political engagement. In fact, as we return to in the concluding chapter, the idea that migrants in general can be assumed to have a desire to be "agents of change," based on insights from our interviewees, merits some critical questioning.

In our interviews, we also asked migrants about their own thoughts on the question of how migration may affect political views. Views were quite split on this question. Some migrants argued that many Poles (in Norway, specifically) work here, but have their family and life there (Poland), and so migration really does not affect much change, based on exposure to a new context:

> I think that the Norwegian debates don't have an impact at all. let's not hide the fact that the majority of people who vote are simply workers who are working and are strengthening the Polish economy and they have houses in Poland and they have family in Poland. I think that they are dedicated and always go vote and never watch Norwegian TV and don't integrate at all, so to speak, with Norwegian Society. and I think that's the largest portion of people who vote, that's what I think.
>
> (Mikołaj, Polish migrant, in Oslo 11 years, in his 30s)

Other interviewees reflected on the fact that there may be dual orientation points, which are likely to have some impact, perhaps also on political views and voting preferences "back home":

> I tend to believe that we aren't watertight compartments from this point of view, what… I've been politicized here, and it might well be that many other Romanians share my same story. So yeah, both. The expectations you have about the Romanian politics are of course influenced by the political culture here.
>
> (Maria, Romanian migrant, in Barcelona 18 years, in her 40s)

Further interviewees reflected on the possibility of quite dual approaches to political questions in the country of origin and settlement—including in relation to voting preferences:

> I strongly believe that it is possible to vote in one country a certain color and in the other an opposite color. As it happened to me, I didn't even have hesitation at one point (smiles) to vote center-right instead of a left, and here to vote left.

(Laura, Romanian migrant, in Barcelona 15 years, in her 40s)

Based on our interviews then, we see that the impact of migration on migrants' political views varies. Often previously held views are kept, while some form new opinions on new issues. We saw no shift from right- to left-wing or vice versa. Meanwhile, voting preferences can be split, with positions that differ between the two contexts. The political dynamics in both countries of settlement and origin matter to a degree, but with considerable variation, not least depending on exposure to and engagement with political developments in each of the contexts.

Concluding Discussion

Our interviewees' reflections around external voting and transnational political participation resonate in clear ways with current debates about citizenship—and its relation to, respectively, residence and voting rights. But also with the highly contested question of citizenship *as membership* of what? The polity and therefore the national community? Or the polity as a structure which does not overlap perfectly with the nation, but holds the nation-state together nevertheless? These are questions that matter as much in relation to emigration—as to immigration, though the real political and economic implications are clearly most salient for *residents* of any given polity (Bauböck, 2005; Bauder, 2014; Bloemraad & Sheares, 2017; Bloemraad, 2022; Brubaker, 2010; Erdal et al., 2018; Finn, 2019; Weinar, 2017).

Any state's residents might be non-citizens, or citizens from birth, or by naturalization, thus contributing to a complex mix of who the "people" in the polity actually are (Erdal, 2016; Smith, 2003). This is the case, even before non-resident citizens aka our "external voters" discussed here are mentioned. And not to mention non-resident *former* citizens, who may have renounced their citizenship in order to naturalize, but nevertheless are emotionally and sometimes practically tied to their country of origin, are considered (Erdal et al., 2018; Vink & Bauböck, 2013). The latter being relevant for migrants from Poland and Romania who left during Communist times, and can have naturalized before many West European states permitted dual citizenship, and thus are no longer citizens, but certainly considered a part of the diaspora.

While numerically external voting may matter in a given election, depending on how diaspora votes are practically made to count, it is rarely the top-most crucial issue in any election. However, the relationships

between citizenship, residency, and membership are brought to the fore in very concrete ways when considering (possible and actual) transnational political participation. This, arguably, has the potential to offer space for constructive exchange about these relationships, in what are otherwise often highly polarized debates, with quite exclusionary rhetoric involved, if centered on "immigration."

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CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

Abstract This chapter takes stock of the evidence gathered in the empirical sections and summarizes the main findings. We discuss the differences between diaspora voting and homeland results, the ideological differences, as well as the question of low turnout and its determinants. We then move to the broader problem of legitimacy and normative consideration of external voting. Building on the interviews presented in Chap. 4, we also ask how external voting plays into the broader mechanism of political remittances and whether migrants necessarily desire to be agents of political change in their homelands. We conclude with an overview of the areas for future research, presenting both the empirical knowledge needs and normative questions to be tackled.

Keywords External voting • Ideology • Turnout • Citizenship • émigré enfranchisement • Political remittances

In May 2019, thousands of Romanian citizens living in Western Europe spent hours in mile-long queues to cast their ballot in a European Parliament election combined with a national referendum on corruption. With very few polling stations open and a highly inefficient and understaffed voting system, hundreds of those that spent a large part of the day queuing were denied the opportunity to actually vote. As the doors of embassies and consulates were shut at 9 pm, those still outside expressed

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their frustration and anger, first by chanting "We want to vote!" and "Thieves!" and later by storming the embassy premises, jumping over fences, and banging on doors (Jamieson, 2019). In the Netherlands, riot police intervened to control the frustrated crowd (Dutch News, 2019), and regular police forces were called by embassy staff in the United Kingdom, Belgium, and elsewhere.

The images from these events went viral, becoming the strongest, though not necessarily representative, illustrations of the phenomenon of external voting. In light of the evidence gathered and discussed in this book, we are able to dismiss some of the misconceptions these images may cause. For instance, long queues outside polling stations may be, and often are, interpreted as a sign of high turnouts. In fact, as we have seen in Chap. 3, voter turnout is, with few exceptions, consistently low. More often than not, long queues are an indicator of inefficient voting procedures or even deliberate voter suppression. What the May 2019 Romanian voters' experience highlights is the vulnerability of non-resident voters to the problem of access, electoral infrastructure, and voting regulations, discussed in Chap. 4, which are all controlled by the governments and electoral authorities of the countries of origin. These may be changed from election to election, either in favor of migrants or to their detriment, depending on the incumbents' political interest or simply disinterest in diasporas. Our interviewees' experiences with voting in the presidential elections in Romania November 2019 suggest that the embassies and consulates in Norway and Spain certainly had increased the capacity for external votes to be cast, without undue waiting times.

However, the dramatic images from the streets outside Romanian embassies also illustrate another feature of external voting, one which may be counterintuitive. They suggest that emigrants can still be very interested in homeland politics, even after many years spent abroad, and their political engagement can be quite passionate, even if it carries quite significant risks—such as confronting host country police. One voter, a Romanian based in Amsterdam, explained her motivation:

> The reason I do this [vote in Romanian elections] after living for ten years abroad is that I still feel connected to my home country and I want it to become a better place to which I hope to return one day. I wish to see there a more democratic democracy, as I got used to seeing here in western Europe. What happened today in Amsterdam was not democratic […] At the end of the day, we were hundreds of disappointed people outside unable

> to vote. The queue was still filling up the square in front of the voting station. And I'm sure they were many more that gave up along the way at seeing such a long line. (Jamieson, 2019)

This extended attachment to homeland politics, which does not necessarily wane with time, or does not do so in simple linear terms, makes the transnational political practice of external voting particularly interesting. As out-of-country voters are citizens of their countries of origin, often formed and influenced by domestic debates, their behavior and electoral choices are sometimes best captured by the robust theoretical and methodological apparatus of comparative politics. On the other hand, they remain a peculiar category of voters, who are exposed to different life experiences, transnational political circumstances, and who are often mobile and transcend spatial and social boundaries. We can try grasping their transnational positionality with concepts and tools from migration studies, human geography, and using more interpretative methods.

A synthesis of these distinct vantage points on external voting is what we aimed to achieve in this volume, where we brought together different kinds of empirical evidence and methods from different social science disciplines to interrogate the phenomenon of external voting and learn more about this understudied form of electoral behavior. Chapter 2 sketched the historical and political context of migration within the European Union following the 2004–2007 Eastern Enlargement. We looked at intra-European migration and the internal EU space because external voting franchise is almost universal, and the cultural and political context allowed us to bracket off certain factors and focus on the dynamics of electoral participation from abroad. In Chap. 3, we presented aggregate data from electoral results across 6 sending countries, 15 host countries, and almost two decades of voting. In Chap. 4, we zoomed in on four communities of intra-European migrants to better understand why and when they engage in external voting, how they perceive this political practice, and what meaning they attach to this form of political expression.

In the remaining part of this final chapter, we will summarize what we have learned, and what this book's findings can tell us about external voting both in Europe and more generally. We will follow the order of the research questions posed in the introduction (Chap. 1) and discuss them in light of the evidence gathered. We will then move on to a discussion of the problem of the legitimacy of external voting, which is raised both by political theorists looking at transnational politics and, as we have seen in

Chap. 4, by migrants themselves, and influences their decision to vote or not. Further, we return to the context of Central European democracy backsliding and consider whether and under what circumstances migrants may be a source of political remittances and act as political agents. Finally, we point to potential avenues for future research and gaps that our own inquiry was not able to adequately address.

What Have We Learned About External Voting? Discussion of Findings

The main puzzles that motivated the research presented here were related to the way external voting is actually organized, practiced, and perceived by migrants, and what the voting results can tell us about transnational politics, particularly in Europe following the Eastward expansion of the EU. How do migrants use their external voting franchise? What parties and candidates do they vote for when they have the opportunity? Do the results of external voting differ systematically from domestic results? Furthermore, what direction and ideological coloring does this difference take? Another set of questions related to the turnout: how high or low is it, and what trends can we uncover? Lastly, we were interested in migrants' perception of external voting, which influences their decision to participate or not. What have we learned from the evidence gathered in the DIASPOlitic project?

Differences Between Diaspora Voting and "Homeland" Results

Our analysis of external voting results (votes cast abroad) and results in countries of origin elections used the concept of disparity to measure systematic differences between the two. Where overall disparities are concerned, our findings show that the aggregate electoral preferences of diaspora voters remain distinct from those observed in the country of origin, in both parliamentary and presidential elections. Although there are often significant differences between various diaspora communities in the extent of this disparity, there are very few cases in which diaspora voting comes close to mirroring origin-country voting precisely.

On the other hand, there is little conclusive evidence of consistent divergence. While for instance migrants from Czechia and Romania are increasingly less likely to vote the same way in parliamentary elections as

their origin-country equivalents, in other cases there are either no discernible trends, or ambiguous ones. In the cases of Bulgaria, Latvia, and Poland, an initial post-accession convergence was followed by divergence. These findings are in line with the conclusion of Ahmadov and Sasse (2015, p. 1787) that migration experience does not necessarily result in divergences of political outlooks.

In sum, the idea that with the passage of time diaspora communities will become more detached from and less responsive to domestic politics receives no support from our analysis. Nevertheless, the absence of increasing disparity at the overall level may occur alongside increasing disparity with respect to particular issues.

Ideological Differences

Our analysis of ideological disparities shows that few conclusions can be drawn about tendencies among diaspora voters overall. To some extent, this reflects supply-side differences: if a country offers its electorate only parties with, say, anti-LGBT-rights attitudes, then this will be reflected in the absolute positioning of even the most LGBT-friendly diaspora community. However, even in cases where there is a significant ideological skew, clear *relative* differences can be identified, and in some cases, there is evidence of increasing divergence.

With respect to populism, our findings echo those of Turcu and Urbatsch (2022), who find that populists generally enjoy lower expatriate vote shares. The obverse of this is that pluralist parties are more likely to enjoy greater support abroad. It is worth noting that recent disparities between diaspora and origin-country voters on the latter issue are more substantial in Czechia and Poland, where recent political debate has revolved around divergent conceptions of democracy (Bustikova & Guasti, 2017). Koinova (2009) has argued that diasporas may play a role in encouraging democratization, and these findings suggest that diasporas may also be a source of opposition to democratic backsliding. However, more cases are needed to determine whether this relationship holds more generally, and we will return to this question shortly.

Where socio-cultural issues are concerned, the picture is more mixed. On the GAL/TAN dimension, which aggregates a number of non-economic issues, there are—with the exception of recent elections in Poland and Romania—few consistent differences between diaspora and origin-country voters. However, a more disaggregated approach which

compares the choices of voters by issue shows that diaspora voters are generally more likely to support pro-LGBT parties and less likely to support parties that are opposed to immigration. In most cases, and perhaps unsurprisingly, migrant communities are more likely to vote for pro-immigration parties than their origin-country counterparts. This may be evidence against the notion that earlier migrants seek to "kick away the migration ladder," but we should be very careful in drawing such conclusions. As we have seen in Chap. 4, some migrants vote in both country-of-origin and country-of-residence elections, and their attitude toward the broad issue of "migration" may be very different in those two political contexts.

Where the remaining socio-cultural questions are concerned, however, the differences we observe are origin-country-specific rather than general. The clearest and most consistent differences between diaspora and origin-country electorates are economic in character. Diaspora voters are more likely to vote for parties with a more right-wing economic profile, while origin-country voters are more likely to vote for parties that take a universalistic approach to welfare. Diaspora voters from Czechia stand out in particular on this dimension, being significantly more likely to support parties with a more right-wing economic profile.

The substantial disparity between diaspora and origin-country voting in Romania with respect to clientelism also indicates the potential importance of individual issues that are relevant in particular country contexts. This observation, which is also echoed in the distinct divergences we can see in post-2015 Poland with respect to LGBT rights, immigration, and cultural superiority, suggests that differences between diaspora and origin-country voters' choices are not simply the residual products of structural socio-demographic differences, but also reflect active engagement with contemporary political issues: diaspora voters "do not blindly vote from abroad" (Ognibene & Paulis, 2021, p. 15).

What Do We Know About Turnout?

Our findings with respect to turnout both reflect and build on the insights already generated by the existing literature. Following accession, large numbers of Central and Eastern European migrants moved to Western Europe, but the fluctuation in turnouts suggests that recently rising average turnout is not necessarily attributable simply to rising numbers of migrants. Rather, it appears to be a function of the number of migrants, the socio-demographic profile of the diaspora communities, the nature of the polling infrastructure, and the nature of the political contest.

While Kostelka (2017, p. 1078) finds that the weakness of post-communist transnational participation has contributed to a significant proportion of the decline in turnout in elections across the region, it is clear that—Czechia aside—the proportion of diaspora voters participating in these elections has increased as a percentage of turnout overall. There is no simple explanation for this outcome. Partly it is attributable to a rising number of diaspora voters abroad. It may to some extent reflect the socio-demographic composition of diaspora electorates, although it is worth noting that younger and more mobile citizens are by no means the most disciplined of voters in the origin country. It may reflect a differential decline in turnout rates among diaspora and origin-country voters rather than an absolute increase in the latter. It may also reflect improvements to overseas voting infrastructure. Yet it cannot be reduced to a single factor.

Clearly, the extra barriers to participation that diaspora voters face, and the often uneven quality and unpredictable functioning of electoral infrastructure abroad, contribute substantially to the removal of a significant proportion of potential voters from the electorate. Yet as the examples of the 2019 presidential elections and 2020 parliamentary elections in Romania demonstrate, both amendments to electoral laws and political mobilization can result in significant increases in turnout among the diaspora, even a number of years—and election cycles—after the onset of a wave of migration. These findings are in line with Escobar et al.'s (2015, p. 22) analysis of the turnout practices of Colombian migrants, in which they find that there is no clear relationship between time spent abroad and propensity to participate. The striking mobilization of the Irish diaspora to return home to vote in the abortion referendum of 2018 is testament to the extent to which diaspora voters may be motivated to exercise their democratic rights, even in the presence of substantial barriers to doing so.

Our data on presidential elections, which at times see record turnouts abroad, are a case in point. The reason for this might be that diaspora voters participate in presidential elections on the same basis as origin-country voters, whereas translating diaspora votes into parliamentary seats is more complicated and often makes the link between vote and outcome less clear. However, the diaspora turnout in presidential elections is not consistently higher than in parliamentary elections, suggesting that the more "direct" nature of the election is not decisive.

It is important to underline that while post-EU-accession diaspora voters, who face some visible barriers to participation, are less likely to turn out in elections than their origin-country counterparts, their participation

has not diminished with time, and those who *do* vote make choices that are legible with respect to origin-country political dynamics and relatively consistent over time.

Why Do Migrants Vote, or Not?

Returning to the problem of electoral infrastructure and access, our qualitative research insights also reveal that the practicalities of being able to vote go far beyond rules of enfranchisement but relate heavily to the nitty-gritty aspects of implementation, often in far-flung diasporic contexts, with poorly staffed consular services, and limited actual interactions with diaspora members. Thus, in many cases, the reasons why migrants vote or decide not to take part in elections relate to the practicalities of casting a ballot in a given election. This includes issues like requirements for registration, timelines, and location of polling stations, when these are not digitally provided and where postal voting is not an option (Szulecki et al., 2021).

Voting behaviors pre- and post-migration really also need to be understood jointly, and in the plural, recognizing that (to an extent) every single election is a separate event, which may or may not be participated in, and the considerations and dynamics driving voting or non-voting in each instance may vary. While the salience of the practicalities around voting cannot be underestimated, the disillusionment with the political programs on offer in certain elections appears as an even more weighty explanation for low voter turnout. That means that émigré voters face a supply side problem in terms of homeland political parties' lack of interest in their problems of simply lack of adequate choice, even if they follow country of origin politics closely. This fact may be due to their experience of politics in country-of-residence context, and their own comparison of approaches to certain key political issues (Erdal et al., 2022).

Legitimacy and Normative Considerations Surrounding External Voting

One surprising finding of our qualitative research was the prominence of the normative considerations of external voting as such as a factor provided by migrants to explain their (non)participation. On the one hand, external voting was cast in terms of fulfilling a civic duty and exercising a

democratic privilege which others had longed for and struggled to achieve. As two Romanians living in Oslo, explain:

> Ever since I was able to vote, I always voted […] My parents were very careful about teaching me this responsibility. I am not very involved politically speaking but this is the least I can do. It is our responsibility to vote. Others are fighting to have this right. (Elena, Romanian in Oslo, in her 30s)

> I consider that as long as it is our right to go in the street and complain about the things the people that lead us didn't do regarding the tax system for example then I should also have my part of the responsibility. If we talk about politics from the comfort of our couch then yes, it is acceptable not to vote but if we want to go out on the streets and protest then the vote should be mandatory. I personally always did everything I could to go and vote.
>
> (Daniela, Romanian in Oslo, in her 40s)

On the other hand, the idea that migrants can influence politics and chose decision-makers in a country they no longer reside in is highly controversial. One Romanian migrant, quoted in Chap. 4, argued for "taking away the right to vote of any person who changes their residence," asking "why should we dictate the destiny of a country that we do not live in?"

What clearly emerges from these quotes is the clash between two competing principles and two sources of political legitimacy. According to one, political participation tied to citizenship, and so political rights are transferable beyond territorial confines of the state. According to the other, democratic participation requires residence, physical presence on the territory of a polity, and thus being part of a society through everyday presence, not through birthright.

These problems and the tension between citizenship-based participation and residence-based participation are at the heart of political debates around both external voting and immigrant enfranchisement. They are present in the media in countries that are discussing emigrant franchise, currently most notably Ireland, where are referendum on external voting rights is to be held in 2024 (O'Shea, 2022). It is also discussed on the occasion of almost any election where expat ballots are said to influence the result of the election—no matter if that claim is true or false. It has also been the subject of discussions among the authors of this volume, who all

have a migratory background and enjoy complex electoral rights across different polities.

The citizenship versus territory question is central to the first wave of scholarship on external voting (Fliess & Østergaard-Nielsen, 2021), which still remains a matter of heated debate among political theorists and lawyers (Bauböck, 2005, 2006, 2016; Lappin, 2016; López-Guerra, 2005; Rubio-Marin, 2006). What is striking is just how lively these supposedly abstract problems are in migrants' own accounts. A practical solution which is provided by several among our respondents is in line with the theoretical proposal made by Rainer Bauböck, in what he called "stakeholder citizenship." As another migrant quoted in Chap. 4 suggested, "I only think it is ok to vote if you are thinking of going back to your country or if you still have a family back there and you are thinking about their well-being." This notion of having a stake in the future of the polity in which you are a voter appears sensible and intuitively acceptable.

However, as the material we have gathered and partly presented in this book shows, it is easier said than done. What degree of engagement and what plan for a "future" can constitute the basis for a political claim to participation is very difficult to delineate in practice. Meanwhile, it is clear that political cultures of different countries have varying acceptance for diaspora politics. For instance, throughout the history of Poland since the eighteenth century partitions, émigré political activism and diaspora institutions played a central role in maintaining and shaping national identities and political projects, which arguably explains the early introduction of external voting. The hopes some societies have for emigrant political engagement, and the "stake" that migrants can have in homeland politics, bring us to yet another important discussion in transnational politics—that of political remittances, and the possibility of "remitting democracy" back home.

Do Migrants Desire to Be "Agents of Change"?

We have already discussed migrants' possible motivations for voting in country-of-origin elections, and how these are often embedded within transnational lifeworlds. It follows that migrants may want to affect change within these transnational lifeworlds—at least, that is one possibility. Whether this is change that is intra-familial, more social, or political also in a more public and formal sense, is likely to vary. In research on migrants' impacts on their contexts of origin, the money sent "back home"

remittances are often discussed. Indeed, in many origin contexts, remittances can be significant, for families, for local communities, and even at the national level boosting foreign exchange reserves. But also, other types of less tangible flows might place a mark—resulting from migration. These are often discussed as "social remittances" (Levitt, 1998; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011), and increasingly a subset focused on political issues, as "political remittances" (Hartnett, 2020; Krawatzek & Müller-Funk, 2020; Tabar & Maalouf, 2016).

As we argue elsewhere (Erdal et al., 2022), there is a need to better understand how the fact of being exposed to multiple contexts impacts how people think about various issues can potentially be connected with a desire to forge change, for instance, in the origin context. As we discussed above, migration means exposure to multiple contexts, where gender equality may be seen differently, may be differently legislated or practiced. The mere fact of being exposed to this results in some reflection. Whether or not it is then turned into further reflection and possible consideration of own views, or accepted as artifacts of different societal contexts, may vary. But the exposure and knowledge of different modes of organizing in different societies is a result of migration, whenever migrants have at least a minimum of exposure to the society they arrive in.

So, exposure and comparative evaluation appear to be relatively common. Meanwhile, articulation of thoughts about this comparative evaluation, or even thoughts about paths to change which might emanate from insights from such comparative evaluations, we argue, are relatively rare. Building on this, we turn to the question: Do migrants desire to be "agents of change"?

First, it is worth underscoring the non-linearity and inconsistency we find in interviewees' comparative evaluations across different themes. It is thus not given that more conservative, or more liberal, views on a given issue are a sound predictor of the type of views on any other single issue. Such human inconsistency is not necessarily surprising but also contradicts the assumption of democratizing—or liberal—political remittances from migrants living in liberal democracies. The non-linearity of migrants' views reflects the complexity of their life journeys: socialization and re-socialization before and after migration; the socio-political contexts they relate to simultaneously; the networks they are part of; and their personal life experiences.

This contextualizes the question of a desire to be an agent of change—and specifically in this context: of the desire to be an agent of political

change, impacting societal changes in the country of origin. We argue that the process consists of *content creation [exposure—comparative evaluation—articulation]—desire—transmission—impact*. And we find that many migrants engage in comparative evaluation, due to their exposure to multiple contexts. But how can we discern the desire to be an agent of change, which is necessary for transmission to put impact in motion? From comparative evaluation—to an articulation of paths toward change, there is a gap, which many migrants do not appear to seek to bridge, or even to be interested in seeking at all.

We therefore analyzed our data with the question of desire, but also of attempts at articulation of paths toward change in mind. We found three types of reasoning which can shed light on why migrants may *not* desire to engage, *not* have faith in the possibility of political change, or *not* be interested in taking on the role as agents of change:

- *Personal:* For example, if migrants see their future in country of settlement, rather than returning to the country of origin; or if migrants consider the chance of success in creating change to come at too high a personal cost.
- *Pathological:* For example, if migrants are disillusioned with the particularities of the situation in their country of origin; or if migrants do not think that change is possible in the country of origin.
- *Incompatible:* For example, if migrants do not have faith in the transferability of specific ideas to country of origin; or if migrants do not think that the country of origin can learn from the country of settlement.

Conversely, while we do not in our dataset find much strong expression of desire among migrants to act as agents of change, we recognize that isolated voices, in parts of their interviews, do espouse hopes for possible change, including change which migrants could be part of. Thus, we argue that there should be analytical purchase in also exploring an inverse set of reasoning. Here the personal might be flipped toward a desire for becoming an agent in change, whether by considering return—or assessing the risks and costs of engagements more positively. Similarly, the pathological might change and rather be inspired and hopeful for change, whereas assessments of incompatibility might be reconsidered, with potential for transferability being recognized.

Meanwhile, the factors we propose may aid explaining migrants non-desire to be agents of change, often remain implicit, not fully explored, or not the focus of existing studies. This, we argue, is also relevant to questions of the determinants and motivations for external voting and transnational political engagement, where, we suggest, the question of desire to affect change in the context of origin often appears to be a somehow implicit and unaddressed assumption.

We should emphasize that migrants' external voting must be seen in relation to their life abroad—which could be assumed to have some impacts—whether in affecting political views, in relation to experiences of acceptance or discrimination, or regarding whether voting in the country of settlement is possible and/or practiced too. Thus, migrant voting in country-of-origin elections is usefully explored in relation to the transnational social fields within which (many) migrants' lives unfold (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004). Furthermore, migrants' electoral participation in countries of origin is varyingly associated with the nature and extent of diaspora politics—in the context of a given country of origin, but also in relation to the specific country and place of residence abroad. This brings in a collective level of consideration, which may be significant in cases where emigrant political influence has mattered.

Research Frontiers and Future Knowledge Needs

We conclude this volume with some gaps that remain unaddressed, and which will require future research. These are divided between empirical knowledge needs on the research frontier of transnational politics and external voting, in general and specifically in the context of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as more normative knowledge needs related to the problematization of external voting as a feature of modern democracies.

Three Areas for Further Research: Empirical Knowledge Needs

The most immediate gap requiring further research, also employing the data we have presented here, relates to the influence of country-of-origin politics and socio-economic contexts on migrant socialization, political views, and in consequence on external voting results. We have seen important systematic differences not only between sending countries (i.e., Latvian and Bulgarian diasporas) but also between different diaspora communities originating from the same country (e.g., Poles in Italy vs. Poles

in Spain). Whether these differences reflect demographic composition of different diaspora groups or are a result of a selection bias is difficult to assess, but aggregate external voting data can be confronted with aggregate host country data, including factors such as the political ideology of incumbent governments, attitude toward immigration, socio-economic situation, and welfare state provisions. Some attempts in that direction have already been made (see Ognibene & Paulis, 2021), but the hypothetical formative influence of host country contexts on diasporas requires much more research.

As we have noted already in Chap. 3, the data we have gathered does not allow us to draw conclusions regarding the role of migrants and diaspora communities in democracy backsliding in Central and Eastern Europe. We have learned that CEE migrants tend to choose parties which are less populist, more pluralist, and more liberal (particularly economically) than the homeland mean voter. This can be interpreted as evidence of socialization to a more "mature" and consolidated democracy and internalization of its values. But we should be very careful with such conclusions, not just for normative reasons—and overestimating the quality of democracy in Western Europe. Results of external voting do not necessarily reflect the political preferences of entire émigré communities. With low turnout, they may simply reflect the political preferences of those voters who did show up on a particular election day. Even if we could treat these results as representative for entire migrant communities, the relationship with backsliding is difficult to assess. Are these voters the "absent" liberals, who could have shaped domestic politics in CEE countries differently, had they not left? Or are they passive agents of change, in that the stories they tell and examples they give inform their families and friends about Western European realities and influence their political choices?

To get a better understanding of the degree in which external voting results are representative of diaspora communities, and to know more about who votes between different elections—beyond the limited clues we got from the interviews discussed in Chap. 4—we would need a meso-level analysis, drawing on representative surveys that could connect aggregate data with individual experiences. This would also allow for exploring non-voter political views which are untraceable with election results. While this kind of survey-based exploration of migrant communities is already quite popular (see for example Chauvet et al., 2016; Himmelroos & Peltoniemi, 2021; Michel & Blatter, 2021; Peltoniemi, 2018; Pérez-Armendáriz & Crow, 2010; Rother, 2009; Wass et al., 2021), comparative

studies looking at larger numbers of migrant communities remain rare, and the fact that external voting results are still seldom used, there is not enough bridge-building between these levels yet.

Finally, exploring the way mass migration from CEE impacts sending countries requires more attention to be paid to those "left behind." Though it may appear paradoxical, political remittances, as a transnational phenomenon, can only be fully traceable if we complement a focus on migrants with a focus on their countries of origin. Trailblazing work in this area has been done by Anne White, Izabela Grabowska, and colleagues on the cultural diffusion and social remittances influencing Poland in the wake of EU accession (White et al., 2018; White & Grabowska, 2019), but a similar endeavor focusing specifically on political remittances is yet to be conducted. A combination of different methods would be required to capture the mechanisms through which migration—as a process—and migrants—as more or less voluntary agents of change—influence domestic politics (understood most broadly): spanning from surveys, through interviews with migrants' friends and families, through textual analyses combing media as well as political speeches for references to migrant experiences and inputs.

Three Areas for Further Research: Normative Dimension

External voting entails the enfranchisement of non-resident citizens to vote in country-of-origin elections (at various levels). This raises a set of questions on the legitimacy of such an arrangement in democratic terms: why and on what basis? And for how long? Some countries practice a 10- or 15-year enfranchisement for citizens moving abroad, but removing voting rights after such a period of time. Furthermore, there are a number of questions pertaining to how such elections from afar should be organized, logistically speaking—where should people vote, in person or online for instance? And when—simultaneous to the country of origin—or beforehand? And quite profoundly, how should the external voters consider democratic representation—do their votes get pooled in local constituencies where they last resided, in other forms, or are their specific diaspora representatives? All of these issues have democratic legitimacy angles to them—and very practical implementation angles too and impact the determinants of external voting in contrasting ways. To date, we do not know enough systematically about the impacts of different arrangements of external voting, nor how this aligns with conceptualizations of

non-resident citizens voting rights from different states, within the Central and Eastern Europe region, and beyond.

A related area which external voting research would merit from further engagement with is the relationships between citizenship and political participation. Arguably, questions of external voting, including external voting rights, ought to be asked and addressed based on engagement with this relationship (see also Bauböck, 2003; Brubaker, 2010; Finn, 2019). This touches on questions about whether or not political participation can or should be limited to residents, also when thinking of political participation beyond external voting. Where, historically, exile governments and diasporic political engagement clearly demonstrates that this cannot always be regulated by the powers that be (Smith, 2003). But how then does external voting fit within the broader landscape of transnational political engagements, for instance in Romania or Poland? How do the state, political parties, and civil society conceive of this interaction, and how it could be productive within the democratic political process? Poland is a country with many citizens abroad, from very different historical migration flows, including descendants of Polish emigrants, not least in the United States. Poland's diaspora policy aims to both maintain and foster patriotism, but significant questions remain—conceptually, in policy, about implementation, and not least with regard to impact (Nowak & Nowosielski, 2022; Weinar, 2017). As we have shown in this book, often the differences between resident and non-resident citizens, when it comes to factors affecting turn-out at elections, cannot perhaps prima facie be assumed. When it comes to political participation broadly, the difference between being present and absent in everyday life is arguably likely to be more significant. Further systematic and comparative empirical evidence is needed, not only across Central and East Europe.

Thirdly, we propose that external voting research may be brought forward by engaging in debates on migration and national inclusion. This is in a sense a natural extension of focusing more on external voting and its relationship with residence—sometimes assumed to be a fixed matter—but also increasingly recognized to be a bit more complicated. While most people change residence serially one place at a time, some people do actually live in several places simultaneously (Carling et al., 2021). And taking matters of citizenship and political participation further too—on the backdrop of questions of residence (and its possible multiplicity)—and

acknowledging the increase of dual citizenship, not just in Europe but around the world, brings us to ask the question: Who is a member (citizen, resident) of what (the nation, the polity, the nation-state), and on what grounds (citizenship, nationhood, residence)?

This question, in any democracy, clearly has a bearing on who should have the right to vote and reveals that the answer is not straightforward. There are pragmatic options—*jus domicili*—citizenship based on residence, based on a general rule of single citizenship, and thus also voting rights only in the state of residence and citizenship, is one such proposition (Bauder, 2014). But this is quite far from the reality of citizenship and voting-right organization today. The thorny issue of the nation, and its role in defining membership in the polity, thus comes to the fore. For countries in Central and East Europe, questions of emigration have grown in salience since the start of the 2000s, and for Poland questions of immigration increasingly too, with the country becoming a country of immigration, certainly from the 2020s.

These demographic shifts, shaping the composition of populations—also have a bearing on conceptualizations of who "we" are—who "the people" are. Here, migrants, both those coming and leaving, possibly returning or circulating, are likely to continue to challenge conceptions of nationhood that are not flexible and dynamic enough to accommodate ongoing change. While inclusive nationhood may be a politically contentious idea in some quarters, in Central and East Europe, as is the case in Western Europe, demographic realities are likely to continue to matter, slowly forging change in everyday life on the ground (Antonsich & Matejskova, 2015; Erdal & Sagmo, 2017)—which ultimately impacts questions of democratic political representation. These processes of change are in urgent need of further documentation and analysis, with a need for perspectives from across disciplines. We hope that this book can make a small contribution to this much needed scholarly effort.

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