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The Extra-Territorial Paradox of Voting: The Duty to Vote in Extra-Territorial Elections

Eleanor Knott

April 2016

Abstract

The question of why individuals vote, the so-called paradox of voting, has been a crucial debate within political science, conceived deductively as an interaction between costs, benefits and, as some argue, duties. This article situates the question of why individuals vote, inductively, and within the context of extra-territorial elections focusing on how and why those who acquire citizenship kin-states participate in kin-state elections following citizenship acquisition, while continuing to reside outside of the kin-state. The article uses the case of newly-acquired Romanian citizens in Moldova, who have never nor intend to reside in Romania, to unpack whether, how and why individuals acquiring Romanian citizenship in Moldova vote in Romanian elections. The article uses an interpretive and inductive approach to explore, from the bottom-up, both the experiences of, and motivations for, political participation of extra-territorial citizens. The article finds, unexpectedly, how those acquiring Romanian citizenship in Moldova are motivated by a duty to participate. Overall, the article argues for a relational and reciprocal understanding of citizenship and voting, between the kin-state, facilitating citizenship as a right, and the citizen, performing their duty, implied by citizenship, to vote.

Keywords: voting; external voting; elections; kin-state, citizenship; Romania; Moldova

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“I conclude that for many people voting is not only a right, it is also a duty.”

— Blais (2000:113)

“Bessarabia, citizenship is your right!”

— Eugen Tomac campaign sticker (2012)

Introduction

The question of why individuals vote has long been an issue of interest to political science. Rational choice approaches to voting conceive of turnout as an interaction between costs, benefits¹ and, as some argue, a duty to vote.² This article seeks not to answer these theoretical questions, but poses a conceptual question concerning the participation of citizens in elections in states in which they do not reside (i.e. extra-territorial participation): *why do individuals vote in elections in a state in which they neither reside nor have ever resided?* In these settings, it would be expected that the benefits of voting are more remote, the costs of voting higher than in domestic elections, while the sense of duty to vote, in a state in which individuals do not reside, largely absent. However, this article finds the reverse: extra-territorial citizens do conceive of a duty to participate, and relate this duty directly to the idea of new citizens legitimate performance. This article approaches political participation not from a deductive or aggregate/statistical perspective (as is more common), but inductively from the bottom-up perspective, focusing on the experience of, and motivations for, voting in extra-territorial elections.

Typically extra-territorial participation has been studied in terms of diaspora, i.e. a migration-centered analysis.³ With the proliferation of dual and multiple citizenships, post-national approaches argue that citizenship is no longer bounded by the nation, but has become more inclusive via migration. The demos too has become post-nationalized: by the beginning of the 21st century over 100 states had enfranchised the right of permanently external citizens to keep their citizenship and voting rights.⁴

This article shifts away from the migration-centered focus of citizenship acquisition and political participation, towards the enfranchisement of citizens following their acquisition of citizenship from kin-states in which they have never resided (kin-citizens). This expansion, and extra-territorialization, of citizenries is especially concentrated in post-Communist examples (e.g. Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia) where states facilitate citizenship acquisition for external communities considered kin (i.e. co-ethnic). Several cases (Croatia, Romania) also facilitate enfranchisement of kin-citizens, regardless of current or previous residency, where these (kin-)states permit and facilitate kin-citizens’ right to vote while remaining (permanently) non-residents,

¹E.g. Downs, “An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy.”

²Riker and Ordeshook, “A Theory of the Calculus of Voting.”, Blais, *To Vote or Not to Vote?*

³E.g. Lafleur, “The enfranchisement of citizens abroad.”

⁴Kasapovi, “Voting rights, electoral systems, and political representation of diaspora in Croatia,” 778.

including in external parliamentary constituencies.⁵ This offers kin-citizens the possibility of determining election results, in external constituencies and presidential elections. For example in Croatia's 2005 Presidential elections, extra-territorial kin-citizens forced a run-off election between the incumbent president and the more nationalist Croatian Democratic Union candidate (HDZ), a party favored by kin-citizens, especially ethnic Croats residing in Bosnia Herzegovina (BiH).⁶ Analyzing this puzzle of extra-territorial kin-citizen participation, this article uses the case-study of Moldova to analyze those who have reacquired Romanian citizenship, and unpack whether, how and why Romanian kin-citizens within Moldova participate in Romanian elections.

The article adopts an inductive agent-centered, bottom-up approach, to analyze the lived experiences of, and motivations for, extra-territorial political participation. This complements existing top-down, institutional approaches by offering a deeper exploration of these extra-territorial political practices. This article is concerned with more than the affective side of voting, i.e. the lived experiences of political participation, by seeking greater conceptual insight into why citizens vote in states they do not reside, nor have ever resided, to inform studies of extra-territorial voting, which are largely top-down, and more general political science debates about political participation (i.e. debates of costs, benefits and duties).

The article finds a reciprocal relationship between the kin-state, facilitating citizenship as a *right*, and the citizen, performing their citizenship *duties* by voting. In other words, by constructing voting as a duty attached to the practice of extra-territorial citizenship, individuals gain legitimacy in performing as voters and, hence, as more legitimate citizens. This supports, empirically and conceptually, arguments in political science,⁷ that stretch beyond extra-territorial examples, about *why* people vote, signaling the need to look beyond rational choice assumptions of costs vs. benefits, to consider the ideas behind voting and, in particular, the notion of voting as a duty and the legitimacy inherent in this construction which ties notions of citizenship to voting.

In the rest of the article, first, I outline Romania as a case of extra-territorial politics. Second, I review two areas of literature: political participation to consider voting in terms of rights, benefits and duties and diaspora voting to consider the extra-territorialization of voting, as well as the need to consider not diaspora voters but also kin-citizens. Third, I discuss the contribution of studying extra-territorial participation inductively and from the bottom-up, in terms of the experiences of, and motivations for, voting in extra-territorial elections. Fourth, I review the methodology of the article, to discuss how respondents were selected and interviewed. Fifth, I move to the empirical material, to focus on three dimensions of extra-territorial voting that emerged inductively from interviews in Moldova (*voting obligations, preferences and intentions*). The article concludes by emphasizing the importance of considering the duty of voting as an important element of voting, even for those who have never resided in the state in which they can vote.

⁵Macedonia, Italy, France and Tunisia also have external constituencies.

⁶Kasapovi, "Voting rights, electoral systems, and political representation of diaspora in Croatia," 783, *Anti*, "The parliamentary elections in Croatia, December 2011," 638-39, see also Kasapovi, "1995 Parliamentary Elections in Croatia."

⁷See Blais, *To Vote or Not to Vote?*

Romania: A Case of Extra-Territorial Politics

This article analyzes the extra-territorial political participation of Romanias kin-citizens within Moldova (who have recently become, or are becoming, Romanian citizens). Since 1991, Romania has facilitated citizenship reacquisition (*redobândire*) for those residing in former territories of Greater Romania (1918-1940), Bessarabia (most of Moldova) and Bukovina (a region of Ukraine), including those who can prove descendancy (up to third generation) from citizens of former Greater Romania.⁸ This has permitted large numbers of Moldovan residents to reacquire Romanian citizenship, while retaining Moldovan citizenship (since 2003) and residing in Moldova.⁹

This reacquisition of citizenship facilitates voting rights in Romanian elections, within Moldova, on the same basis as Romanian migrant diaspora (e.g. voting abroad in polling booths in UK, France, Italy and Spain). These diaspora voters (both migrant and kin-citizens) are institutionalized within external constituencies: Romania has 4 external constituencies for deputy elections (lower house), allocated geographically, and 2 external constituencies for senate elections (upper house), giving migrants and kin-citizens the right to decide political outcomes in these constituencies.

After 2007, when Romania acceded to the EU, the numbers *reacquiring* Romanian citizenship increased in Moldova (although it is unclear by how much).¹⁰ Alongside this expansion of Romanias citizenry, the number eligible to participate in Romania elections and participating in Romanian elections increased substantially (Figure 1, even between the first and second round of the 2014 presidential elections. Even at a time of falling domestic support, Moldovan voters have showed continued electoral loyalty to Romanias President Băsescu (2004-2014), notably in the 2009 presidential election (Figure 2), and his affiliates, such as Eugen Tomac (2012 parliamentary elections, Figure 3) and Viorel Badea (P-DL senator for external constituency including Moldova).¹¹

Moldova dominates its external Romanian constituency overwhelmingly (in comparison to other diaspora voters), particularly in the lower chamber elections. In 2012, 94% of votes in the second overseas constituency (Eastern Europe and Asia), were from Moldovan polling booths, of whom 82% voted for Tomac, securing his victory (Figure 3).¹² Romanian politicians have also begun to pay greater attention to the voting power of the Diaspora, in particular since external constituencies

⁸Citizenship reacquisition has been a policy since 1991. See Iordachi, *Country Report*, Iordachi, "Politics of citizenship in post-communist Romania.", Iordachi, "Dual Citizenship and Policies toward Kin minorities in East-Central Europe."

⁹There is considerable debate regarding how many Moldovans have reacquired Romanian citizenship since 1991. EU statistics (Eurostat, *Acquisition of Citizenship by Sex, Age Group and Former Citizenship*.) indicate that 11,993 Moldovans acquired Romanian citizenship 1998-2009 but are contradicted by Soros Romania report which argues for a much higher number (i.e. that 226,507 cases were solved between 1991-2011), see Panainte and Nedelciuc, *Redobandire cetateniei romane (Reacquisition of Romanian citizenship)*.

¹⁰Though, to appease the EU, Romania suspended its citizenship reacquisition policy prior to EU accession (2004-2007). See Iordachi, *Country Report*.

¹¹King and Marian, "Antagonism and Austerity", Biroul Electoral Central, *Rezultate finale Statisticăstrăinătate pe țări, Alegeri pentru Camera Deputatilor si Senat, 9 Decembrie 2012*, Biroul Electoral Central, *Pentru alegerea Președintelui României din anul 2009 și pentru Referendumului National din 22 Noiembrie 2009*.

¹²Calculated from Biroul Electoral Central, *Rezultate finale Statistică străinătate pe țări, Alegeri pentru Camera Deputatilor si Senat, 9 Decembrie 2012*.

were founded in 2008.¹³ They have opened local offices in Chişinău, Moldovas capital, for Romanian politicians, primarily from PSD and P-DL, and fielded local candidates.¹⁴

Romania therefore provides an interesting case, theoretically and empirically, to unpack extra-territorial voting practices. Romania is neither an exception in facilitating the right of extra-territorial citizens to vote (about 100 states currently do), nor in facilitating extra-territorial constituencies (e.g. Ecuador, France, Italy, Portugal, Croatia). However it is one of the most permissive states for facilitating diaspora voting rights which, Burean argues, stems from a normative stance of improving democratic quality via more inclusiveness.¹⁵ More cynically, Romania, alongside other kin-state cases including now Hungary (since 2014), view diaspora as electoral capital. Alongside the continued modification of modifying electoral rules to suit the interests of the incumbent regimes,¹⁶ Romanias diaspora form an important battleground in this popular franchise, not least because they have been electorally decisive (like Croatia), allowing Băsescu (P-DL) to win Romanias 2009 presidential elections.¹⁷ However, the motivations of those participating in Romanias largest, and most expanding, enfranchised extra-territorial citizenry remain under-scrutinized.

Theorizing Extra-Territorial Citizenship and Political Participation

To unpack this kin-citizen puzzle of extra-territorial political participation, this section addresses two areas of literature. First, I review political participation literature to consider voting in terms of costs, benefits and duties. This deductive literature provides a theoretical basis to understand political participation while it contrasts with the inductive approach of this article which aims to see how costs, benefits and duties are discussed in practice.

Second, I review citizenship literature to consider how the demos is becoming increasingly extra-territorialized. This literature offers an overly migration-centered account, overlooking the enfranchisement of kin-citizens, who have more tenuous ties to kin-states, and kin-state elections.

Political Participation

Theories of voting within political science have long pondered the (ir)rationality of voting because it is rarely of self-interest to vote.¹⁸ Downs conceptualized voting in terms of the costs (C) vs

¹³Burean, "Political participation by the Romanian diaspora," 7

¹⁴Tomac himself reacquired Romanian citizenship, as a native citizen of Ukraine born in the Bessarabian region of Ukraine (part of interwar Greater Romania). His PSD opponent, Victor Alexeev, was born and resides in Chişinău (and also reacquired Romanian citizenship to be eligible for election).

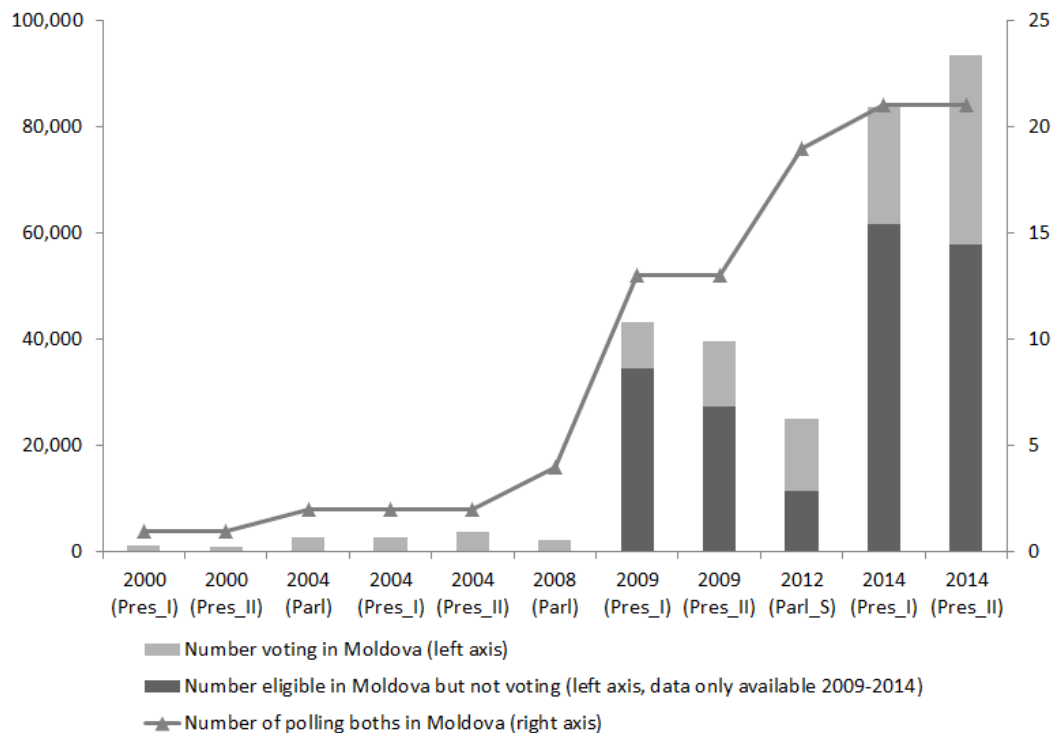
¹⁵Burean, "Political participation by the Romanian diaspora," 7.

¹⁶King and Marian, "Antagonism and Austerity," 313.

¹⁷Dumbrava, '*External vote*' decisive in Romanian elections, Biroul Electoral Central, *Pentru alegerea Preşedintelui României din anul 2009 şi pentru Referendumului National din 22 Noiembrie 2009*.

¹⁸Aldrich, "Rational Choice and Turnout," 246, Leighley, "Attitudes, Opportunities and Incentives," 192.

Figure 1: Number Voting vs. Number Eligible to Vote in Moldova in Romanian Elections (2009-2014)



Source: Biroul Electoral Central (2000-2014)

benefits (B), offset by the probability of an individual's vote being decisive (P)¹⁹ and argued that voting was irrational because the costs exceeded the expected returns/benefits. The paradox of voting is, thus, that we observe individuals, en masse, participating in elections even if, according to rational choice, this action seems irrational.²⁰

Since Downs, explaining this paradox has taken on numerous deviations, including empirical testing of whether socio-economic resources might affect the costs of voting and interest in politics,²¹ whether electoral systems and district magnitude might affect how far votes are considered decisive,²² the significance of the election,²³ as well as other social and political factors (mobilization potential of politicians, social networks). Beyond these factors, and of greatest interest to this article, is the explanation that voting incurs a sense of duty where individuals feel they should participate, or achieve a sense of gratification, by voting which might offset the costs of voting.²⁴

Blais situated this sense of gratification and duty with the idea that voting is a correct practice outside

¹⁹Conceptualized as $R = (B \cdot P) - C$, where R = Reward from voting, see Downs, "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy."

²⁰Blais, *To Vote or Not to Vote?*, vii.

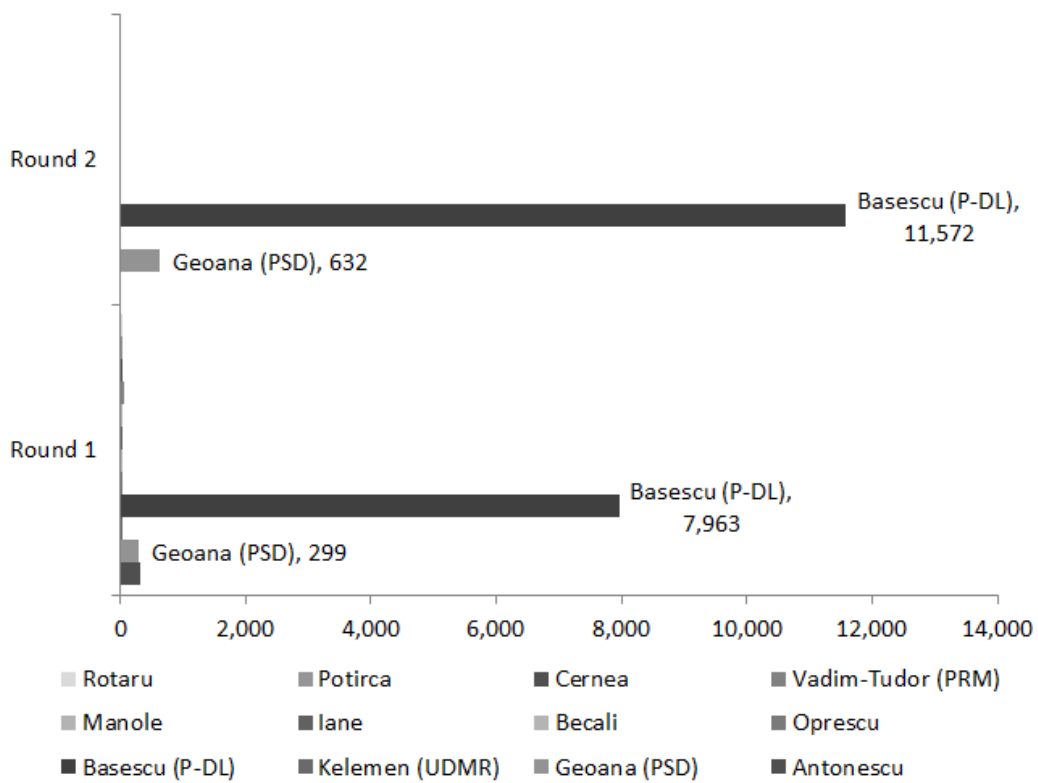
²¹Brady et al., "Beyond SES."

²²Blais and Carty, "Does proportional representation foster voter turnout?."

²³Pacek et al., "Disenchanted or Discerning."

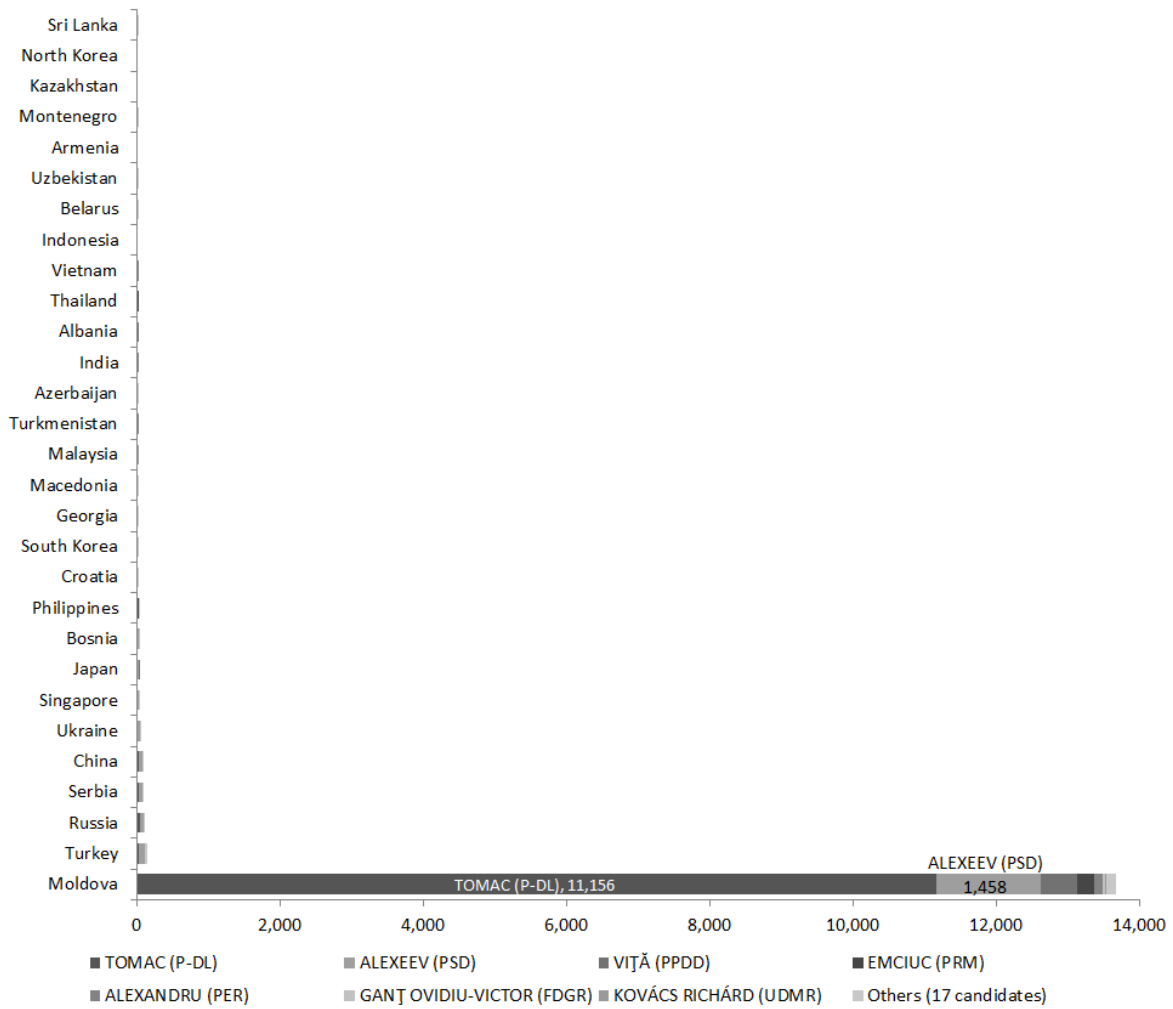
²⁴Expressed as $R = (B \cdot P) - C + D$, see Riker and Ordeshook, "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting," 34.

Figure 2: Romanian Presidential Election results in Moldovan polling stations (2009)



Source: Biroul Electoral Central (2009)

Figure 3: External Constituency Vote in 2012 Chamber of Deputy Elections



Source: Biroul Electoral Central (2012)

the rational choice model, arguing that individuals vote because they are pledging support of certain political values, i.e. democracy and their right to participate.²⁵ Testing this cross-nationally, Blais argued, from an empirical perspective that, at best, rational choice (i.e. costs vs. benefits) is a partial explanation of voting alongside the sense of duty. Critically, Blais finds that students who have never voted (because of ineligibility) still express their sense of duty to vote.

Though deductive, this literature provides a conceptual framework for inductively analyzing why kin-citizens might vote in extra-territorial elections. For example, the benefits of participation would appear to be more remote when individuals voting in an external (kin-)state. Moreover, the sense of duty to participate would also seem less applicable to extra-territorial elections, where individuals may be less committed to uphold democracy in an external state.

Diaspora vs. Kin-Citizen Political Participation

In considering political participation, it is also necessary to consider the extra-territorialization of citizenries and political participation. Secondly, it is necessary to move beyond migration-centered understandings of extra-territorial voting, to address the gap in understanding kin-citizens extra-territorial political practices (Table 1).

With increasing migration, citizenship has become a transnational institution, as an instrument of exclusion and inclusion determining who can access the state they reside in (as immigrants) and retain ties to the state they have emigrated from.²⁶ During the 20th century, states became more tolerant of allowing, and facilitating, the holding of dual and multiple citizenships, to enable individuals to form and retain ties, and participate in, the states to which they have affected interests.²⁷ From an international principle of one nationality only,²⁸ where dual citizenship was conceived as a form of polygamy, dual citizenship became de-securitized, with multiple ties of citizenship no longer perceived as a threat to the state.²⁹

Citizenship via its increasing inclusiveness, demonstrates a cosmopolitan post-nationalization of the state, which in turn implies a de-ethnicization of citizenship and de-territorialization of the state.³⁰ Here political boundaries are no longer the regulatory mechanism of membership; instead states are becoming fuzzy entities, by granting political and social rights, via dual citizenship, to migrants and, crucially, without requiring migrants to renounce their original citizenship.³¹ With citizenship (in most cases) providing the gateway to enfranchisement (i.e. the right to vote), on the basis of one citizen, one vote,³² the demos too has become de-territorialized and extra-

²⁵Blais, *To Vote or Not to Vote?*, 93.

²⁶Ragazzi and Balalovska, *Diaspora Politics and Post-Territorial Citizenship in Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia*, 4

²⁷Faist et al., "Dual Citizenship as a Path-Dependent Process."

²⁸Hague Convention, "Convention on Certain Questions Relating to the Conflict of Nationality Laws."

²⁹Pogonyi, "Dual citizenship and Sovereignty.", Spiro, "Dual Citizenship as Human Right."

³⁰Joppke, "Citizenship Between De-and Re-Ethnicization.", Tambini, "Post-National citizenship.", Soysal, *Limits of citizenship*.

³¹Benhabib, "Borders, Boundaries, and Citizenship.", Benhabib et al., *Identities, Affiliations, and Allegiances*.

³²Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*, 14.

territorialized. Laffleur argues diaspora enfranchisement occurred through democratization and the normalization of the right to vote externally.³³ There is a wide variation in terms of these diaspora voting practices, in terms of low and high turnout, and the marginal vs. greater impact of these practices. While in some cases, diaspora votes can determine electoral outcomes (e.g. Senegalese presidential elections in 2000);³⁴ Hutcheson and Arrighi argue these cases, though infamous, remain exceptional because, predominantly, the electoral impact of diaspora voters is low because of low turnout.³⁵

Alongside these post-national policies of migrant inclusion, kin-states have advanced citizenship acquisition policies for external communities, allowing kin to become kin-citizens and voters. Ragazzi and Balalovska argue this type of citizenship expansion does not resemble a more inclusive cosmopolitan post-nationalization of the state, but a post-territorialization of the state, by advancing preferential ethno-cultural privileges to co-ethnic communities.³⁶ This facilitated kin-state citizenship rarely concerns cosmopolitan norms but, instead, advances a policy of extra-territorial nation-building.³⁷ For example, it is often populist and right-wing regimes which expand kin citizenship rights to win domestic and co-ethnic support via the creation of new extra-territorial/co-ethnic electorates.³⁸

However, so far, much like the discussion for citizenship, research has failed to disentangle migration-centered/post-national voting practices and kin-state voting practices (Table 1). It is important to consider these political dynamics together, given that states can be both reaching out to far away diaspora and nearby kin community and often have similar strategic logics underpinning this engagement (e.g. the potential resources to be gained from these external communities).³⁹ However, from the bottom-up, it is important to consider the different dynamics of diaspora and kin-citizen political participation because of different socialization experiences of these communities vis--vis the state in which they are voting. For example, diaspora voters have been socialized within their home-states, to which they retain voting rights, where their political preferences demonstrate pre-existing voting cleavages, formed while residing in their home-states.⁴⁰ However kin citizens, newly enfranchised within kin-states, have not experienced the same socialization; instead, they create political ties and form preferences, *tabula rasa*, vis--vis kin-states, reinforced by their extra-territorial residence.

Normatively, how far kin-citizens have affected interests vis--vis kin-states can be disputed, because they fail to demonstrate a stake in the kin-state, by virtue of their continued residence outside of the kin-state.⁴¹ However kin-states, such as Romania and Croatia, offer an emotive and

³³Laffleur, "The enfranchisement of citizens abroad," 843.

³⁴Ellis et al., *Voting from Abroad*.

³⁵Hutcheson and Arrighi, "Keeping Pandora's (Ballot) Box Half-Shut," 3

³⁶Ragazzi and Balalovska, *Diaspora Politics and Post-Territorial Citizenship in Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia*, 4.

³⁷Pogonyi, "Dual citizenship and Sovereignty," 685, 91.

³⁸Waterbury, "Making Citizens Beyond the Borders."

³⁹Waterbury, "Bridging the Divide."

⁴⁰Ahmadov and Sasse, "Migrants' regional allegiances in homeland elections," 1788.

⁴¹Baubck, "Stakeholder Citizenship and Transnational Political Participation."

Table 1: Existing Approaches to Dual Citizenship and Political Participation

	Migration Centered	Kin-State Centered
<i>Dual Citizenship</i>	Post-national citizenship	Post-territorial citizenship
<i>Political Participation</i>	Diaspora voting	?

reparative justification for kin-citizen enfranchisement, where citizenship is both a form of moral compensation and reward for past contributions.⁴² This logic needs to be combined with a more cynical analysis of domestic politics, where this kind of enfranchisement (via citizenship facilitation of co-ethnic communities) is advanced primarily by right-wing populist governments in states with dynamic election rules, to use post-territorial nation-building as a mechanism also of electioneering by creating sympathetic new co-ethnic citizens, and hence, voters.⁴³

Empirically, kin-citizen voting practices remain more contentious and influential, such as in Romania. Croatian extra-territorial kin-citizens, especially in BiH, have expressed clear and consistent for the more nationalistic HDZ.⁴⁴ These co-ethnic communities came to make or break candidates in Croatian elections (especially 2005 and 2007) regardless of low turnout.⁴⁵ Secondly, Croatia’s enfranchisement of external co-ethnic Croats contrasts with policies by Croatia that inhibited the political participation of non-ethnic Croats within Croatia, demonstrating a tension (or preference) for kin-citizen inclusion while immigrant exclusion.

Researching Kin-Citizens Political Practices

Thus, it is necessary to study kin-state citizenship and voting practices separately to diaspora voting practices, at least from the bottom-up, given the different political dynamics driving the expansion of kin-state citizenship and enfranchisement, compared to similar policies for diaspora. Understanding the link between becoming a citizen and extra-territorial political participation is important, to decipher the relationship between citizenship as a status (i.e. something to possess) and citizenship in itself as participation (i.e. incurring a sense of duty to behave as a citizen through participating, e.g. in elections). However these questions are often centered on states, e.g. *why do states enfranchise external voters?*,⁴⁶ rather than on agents—*why do individuals (kin-citizens) participate in extra-territorial elections?*—returning to the ideas raised by the theoretical literature on political participation, where voting is (or is not) a calculus between costs, benefits and duties. Thus, it important to study these voting practices directly, by analyzing the agency-centered, demand-side perspective of these extra-territorial practices unpacking whether, how and why kin-citizens participate in kin-state elections.

⁴²Kasapovi, "Voting rights, electoral systems, and political representation of diaspora in Croatia," 780

⁴³Waterbury, "Making Citizens Beyond the Borders."

⁴⁴Kasapovi, "1995 Parliamentary Elections in Croatia," 270.

⁴⁵Ragazzi and Balalovska, *Diaspora Politics and Post-Territorial Citizenship in Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia*, 10.

⁴⁶Lafleur, "The enfranchisement of citizens abroad."

Voting too, as a political practice, is usually studied deductively, via theoretical, historical, statistical or institutional structural comparisons,⁴⁷ to explain and understand voting preferences via quantification,⁴⁸ and to understand how far rationality, incentives structures or values and norms affect these preferences.⁴⁹ This article adopts a less common inductive and interpretivist approach by focusing on the meanings and experiences of political participation.⁵⁰ Advocating for interpretive approaches to voting, Bevir and Rhodes criticize using statistical models and surveys to assume there is a correlation or deductive link between beliefs and practices, whereby studying practices captures beliefs.⁵¹ Instead, Bevir and Rhodes argue that beliefs and practices are constitutive of each other where practices of voting can only be captured by understanding, and engaging with, the intersubjective beliefs that underpin the practice.⁵²

Thus, this article analyzes extra-territorial voting practices, inductively and from the bottom-up, to understand the experiences of, and motivations for, participating in extra-territorial Romanian elections to understand how and why individuals become, and are, engaged with Romania, via political participation. Here the purpose is not to understand only the affective side of voting, i.e. the experiences and performances of voting, but to determine why new citizens might be compelled to vote, who they might vote for (i.e. their preferences) and what might constrain their voting practices (i.e. costs), to weigh up their sense of duty to participate against mediating factors, such as the formation of political preferences and the costs of voting (e.g. time at the polling booth).

Methodology

The article uses semi-structured interviews which I conducted face-to-face with respondents in Chişinău, Moldovas capital city (2012-2013). This article uses a subset of these interviews (40/55), where I selected respondents according to whether they held or had applied for Romanian citizenship (15/55 respondents expressed no interest in applying for Romanian citizenship). These interviews formed part of a larger project to analyze everyday experiences of being Romanian, and engaging with Romanian practices (e.g. citizenship acquisition, voting, scholarship programs), where the criteria of analysis is identifying (culturally, politically, ethnically) either as Romanian and/or Moldovan, leaving out those who primarily identified with minority ethnic groups (e.g. Ukrainian or Russian in Moldova). Throughout the empirical section below, respondents are numbered, e.g. MD-1.

This fieldwork took an interpretive approach, where the focus was on everyday experiences of identification and citizenship acquisition to gain experience-near/emic understandings of identities,

⁴⁷Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*, 30.

⁴⁸Coleman, *What Voting Means*, 28.

⁴⁹Franklin, *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies Since 1945*, Dalton and Anderson, "Citizens, Context, and Choice.", Blais, *To Vote or Not to Vote?*

⁵⁰Schatz, *Political ethnography*, Wedeen, "Conceptualizing culture.", Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, *Interpretive research design*.

⁵¹Bevir and Rhodes, "Defending Interpretation," 70.

⁵²*Ibid.*, Schwartz, "Participation and Multisubjective Understanding."

Table 2: Types of respondents interviewed in Moldova

Young people (18-35 years)	Youth wings of main political parties Student and youth organisations Students and young people
>35 years	Members of other organisations Other ordinary citizens

institutions and concepts,⁵³ as opposed to deductive, top-down or experience-far concepts. That respondents discussed their political practices was something that emerged during initial fieldwork, alongside the observation of Romanian political activities in Romania, such as the visit of President Băseșcu in 2013 and the opening of offices of Romanian politicians and parties on both sides of the left-right Romanian political spectrum (2012-2013).

Interview Guide

During the face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which were conducted in whatever language the respondent preferred (Romanian, English or Russian), I adopted a consistent approach in asking similarly constructed questions across respondents to ensure the comparability of data collected. To capture respondents experiences of political participation I asked respondents with Romanian citizenship, firstly, *What can you do as a Romanian citizen?* to establish how far respondents were aware they could vote and/or whether they volunteered this information. This was followed by more substantive questions about whether they *could* vote and, if they believed they *could*, whether they had voted or *would* vote. Lastly respondents were asked to explain their rationale, to unpack why and how respondents chose to participate, or not, in Romanian elections.

Respondent Selection

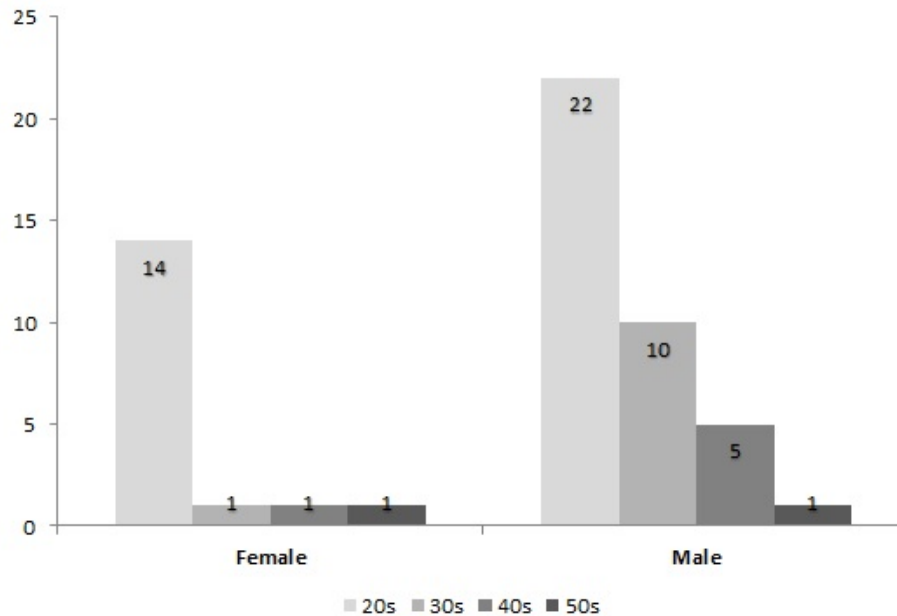
This article does not claim to be representative because the size of respondents is neither large enough nor sufficiently random.⁵⁴ In accessing respondents, I engaged with a breadth of multiple perspectives and contradictory narratives,⁵⁵ concerning their in-depth experiences and practices of everyday extra-territorial citizens in Moldova, as opposed to expert or elite opinions. The everyday focus of the project guided me to seek respondents across the political spectrum (e.g. youth wings of political parties), youth and student organizations not directly involved in politics, as well as those not affiliated to organisations, via university networks and contacts (Table 2, Figure 4). However, the respondents from these different categories is small (e.g. from different political parties); rather, this breadth enables diversity and contrast within the sample and this explorative

⁵³Geertz, "On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding." In political science, see Soss, "Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations.", Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, *Interpretive research design*.

⁵⁴Small, "How Many Cases Do I Need?."

⁵⁵Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, *Interpretive research design*, 51.

Figure 4: Characteristics of Respondents



research, as opposed to enabling an analysis of causal inferences, i.e. that certain characteristics are the cause of these inductive insights; instead, these could be a direction for future research.

A large number of potential respondents were contacted by phone or email, either by cold calling (i.e. contacting without recommendations based on internet sources of organisations) or snowballing (i.e. using existing contacts and previous respondents recommendations). I did not choose respondents as much as choose types of respondents (e.g. students) from which I contacted large numbers (e.g. via student organizations listed online) seeking their response before arranging interviews. Even in terms of identity, where I consider only those who identified as Romanian and/or Moldova (in this article and the larger project), I did not choose respondents based on identity but rather only analyze respondents fitting this criteria. Pragmatically, the focus came to be, predominantly, on the post-Soviet generation (i.e. those who had spent the majority of their life in post-Soviet Moldova), since these individuals were easier to access (via the phone, Internet and snowballing) and build a rapport with.

From Kin-Citizens to Kin-State Voters

As discussed above, the right to vote in Romanian elections is acquired when individuals reacquire Romanian citizenship, i.e. via the practice of citizenship re-acquisition (*redobândire*). *Redobândire* was instrumental in transforming respondents into political actors in the Romanian state from within Moldova, via enfranchisement that was packaged within citizenship practices. This section explores how respondents used this right, and their experiences and sentiments attached to extra-

territorial voting practices.

The article uses the interview data to focus on three aspects of participation in Romanian elections by considering three different dimensions of how voting was discussed by respondents:

1. voting obligations,
2. voting preferences,
3. voting intentions.

In terms of obligations, the article considers whether and how individuals engaged with voting, as a duty derived from citizenship. This focus on obligations links to theorizing of turnout, as explained by a sense of duty, and theorizing of citizenship, conceptualized as an interweaving of rights from the state and duties towards the state; both of these factors can be observed via respondents explanations of this sense of obligation, derived from citizenship, to participate. In terms of preferences, the article unpacks how respondents expressed sentiments of who they would like to vote for and why they expressed these preferences (e.g. self-interest, interest for Moldova). Finally, for intentions, the article unpacks respondents practice of voting and what might mitigate intentions to vote (e.g. availability of voting booths).

Each dimension is now considered in turn, as well as the interaction between these dimensions, to unpack how a sense of obligation expressed by respondents was mediated by voting preferences (i.e. whether respondents have or have not formed voting preferences and how they formed these preferences) and constraints (i.e. how much time it requires to participate). Respondents expression of a duty to vote remains an interesting, and relevant, conceptual contribution demonstrating a reciprocity of kin-state citizenship, where citizenship as a right becomes performed through voting as a duty.

Voting Obligations

That new Romanian citizens in Moldova felt an obligation to vote was a motivation that arose inductively from interviews. During interviews, respondents were asked whether and why they participated. Indeed, it was a surprise the extent to which many respondents expressed such an obligation, and their rationale *patria mamar* example, several described how they felt a big responsibility to vote because they enjoy Romanian citizenship and want to contribute, get involved with the Romanian state to help their mother state (*patria mama*) have a good future [MD-6, MD-8, MD-11, MD-39, MD-26a, MD-53].

This expression of obligation allowed respondents to feel more legitimate as Romanian citizens. Being able to vote, and engaging in this practice, allowed these young respondents, who had acquired Romanian citizenship, to see themselves neither as materialist nor as some opportunists who gained Romanian citizenship wholly for pragmatic reasons [MD-37, MD-38, MD-39, MD-46]. Rather, they were using Romanian citizenship as a right to express themselves as citizens of Romania, as anyone from within Romania would do [MD-37, MD-38, MD-39, MD-46].

Moreover, several respondents explained that it was not a volition, as they did not want too much to vote (own emphasis) [MD-37, MD-38]. Rather it was the attachment to the sense they had a duty and responsibility to vote that overtook their volition, by the normative compulsion to feel that if gave me these opportunities then I want to offer something back, something good [MD-4, MD-20, MD-24, MD-40, MD-43, MD-44].

This emotional content of *redobândire* demonstrated how far this practice resulted in becoming more involved emotionally in Romanian politics, as a female student expressed [MD-45]. This emotional impact of citizenship acquisition has often been overlooked, at least by political studies.⁵⁶ Yet respondents indicated that they developed an emotional connection to Romania, and a sense of legitimacy for this connection, even if this did not alter how they self-identified. This demonstrates too how citizenship practices created political actors because it became more legitimate for them as Romanian citizens to have a voice in Romanian politics and to express this by voting [MD-45].

However, there were respondents that did not subscribe to this idea of obligation and legitimacy. For example MD-50, a male student in Romania, explained his ideological restrictions from not wanting to decide in a country in which I dont know too much because he wouldn't like to get involved in another country's politics. Thus, he felt an obligation not to vote, because he did not believe he was sufficiently implicated in Romanian political and social life to participate and to influence the outcome of Romanian elections.

Overall, most respondents explained their sense of duty to vote, demonstrating their sense of compulsion and legitimacy derived from this practice. They felt a responsibility to give something back to the state who had given them this right and responsibility to show that their motivations underpinning citizenship were not simply material self-interest. However their interests were not affected so much by Romania, even if they thought they were gaining the tools to express their interests vis--vis Romania, because their affected interests remained within Moldova, where they continued, and intended, to reside.

Theoretically, this sense of obligation to participate demonstrates the presence of a sense of duty to vote.⁵⁷ However this was also a different expression of duty, expressed not in terms of upholding the values and system of democracy, as Blais argues, but rather by legitimizing their citizenship practices. This obligation to vote converted them, as a status, to active and legitimate citizens, rather than material citizens, who felt indebted to the state from which they gained rights, demonstrating their active engagement in a rights/duties relationship with the kin-state.

Voting Preferences

Alongside this normative framing, of a duty to vote, respondents discussed who they would vote for. They demonstrated a cleavage between those who named Băsescu as their preferred candidate

⁵⁶Heintz, *Weak State, Uncertain Citizenship*, Suveica, "Entering the EU through the Back Door'?!", Iordachi, "Dual Citizenship and Policies toward Kin minorities in East-Central Europe."

⁵⁷Blais, *To Vote or Not to Vote?*

and those who were more unclear as to who they would vote for.

On the one hand, several respondents expressed an open and avid desire to vote for Bănescu. More interesting were the reasons underpinning this preference. They felt personally grateful to Bănescu, attributing the policy of *redobândire* and the facilitation of this policy to Bănescu, who they believed had deliberately made *redobândire* easier because he was pro-passports [MD-40, MD-43]. Beyond these policies, these respondents felt that Bănescu likes Moldova and gives a feeling of belonging to them as Romanians in Moldova [MD-9, MD-33, MD-45, MD-51]. Indeed Bănescu was framed as being so popular that he could in fact win the Moldovan presidency [MD-51], though Moldova currently does not have a popularly elected president.

Many felt it was important to keep Bănescu in office by voting for him to ensure the Romanian President remained more open for our, for my country [Moldova], as a young male NGO-worker remarked [MD-26a]. Their preference for Bănescu stemmed from an obligation to support the politician who had helped them and to ensure Bănescu remained in office, to ensure the continued facilitation of *redobândire* and more favorable, from respondents perspective, Romanian policies towards Moldova.

By contrast, these respondents had little trust for Romanias opposition (PSD), Ponta (the leader of PSD, and 2014 presidential PSD candidate) was more measly [sic] in terms of the relationship with us so that Moldovas privileged status vis--vis Romania was only as long as Bănescu is in power [MD-9, MD-45, MD-51]. This contradicts Muntean et al.s argument, by demonstrating a different dynamic among Romanian voters in Moldova, premised more on continuity and self-interest rather than objecting to PSDs links to the Romanias Communist party, where PSD is seen as the legacy of the Romanian Communist Party, as Romanian diaspora elsewhere do.⁵⁸ It demonstrates also a different socialization into Romanian politics and the effects this has on voting preferences.

Crucial was the idea that voting in Romanian elections did not contradict their participation in, or threaten their sense of loyalty towards, Moldova. Respondents believed they were voting in Moldovas interests by supporting a Romanian presidential candidate they thought was best for Moldova and themselves. This goes towards explaining why Bănescu (and his affiliates) have been the preferred candidate within Moldova, even at a time of falling support within Romania, because of Bănescus association with the facilitation of citizenship reacquisition, which generated a cult of personality surrounding Bănescu, where he was seen as the best candidate for them and Moldova.

By contrast, other respondents found it harder to voice and/or form political preferences towards specific candidates. As several respondents explained, they were not so involved in Romanias political life and wouldnt be able to tell the difference between different candidates and parties, sufficient to express or form a preference for a candidate [MD-34, MD-38]. MD-34, a professional in his 30s, discussed how a candidate could become preferred, if somebody would really appeal to me, to the needs of me as a Romanian citizen living abroad such as more cooperation between these two, our two countries. This indicated that preferences were formed based on what was best

⁵⁸Muntean et al., "The 2009 Romanian Presidential Election."

for individuals and secondly for Moldova, demonstrating the connection between extra-territorial voting practices (in the kin-state) and their concern for the state in which they resided (home-state).

Several respondents were critical of those voting in Romanian elections, that they did not vote in an informed way but rather in an emotional way [MD-5, MD-33, MD-40, MD-45]. MD-11, a young businessman involved in politics, believed this made respondents more likely to vote for Bănescu, because of his visibility and popularity in Moldova. Rather than caring which color or ideology they voted for, Moldovans associated Bănescu personally with Romania's preferential attitude towards Moldova [MD-11].

Respondents' sense of distance from Romania, and Romanian politics, cemented this informational deficit and encouraged an emotional approach to voting. For example, MD-24, a young professional who was moving to Romania, believed that once she had lived in Romania she would be a lot more aware of who are the main political actors and would change from expressing her preference as a collective family decision to an individual practice because she would know more what is my personal opinion about who I should vote for. This demonstrates the power of family networks in socializing voting preferences, constructing voting as a collective practice in the absence of sufficient information to contest this collective preference. It was only by exiting the extra-territorial community, and residing in Romania, that MD-24 believed she could vote as an informed, and affected, actor in Romanian elections (i.e. by no longer participating as an extra-territorial voter).

This section has discussed the extent to which Bănescu, and his political affiliates, were the explicit and implicit choice of a significant proportion of respondents, not only because of his visibility, but because of his personal association with a policy the respondents benefited from. Even if respondents had not explicitly formed their preferences, their explanation of how they would form their preferences indicated the self-interest shaping their preferences, to the extent of wanting to choose a candidate that would be beneficial for them as extra-territorial individuals, and as an extra-territorial community and constituency, as well as their sense of duty to Bănescu as the direct facilitator of their right to reacquire Romanian citizenship.

Voting Intentions

While respondents expressed their sense of obligation to vote, and their preferences as to whom they would vote for, these were offset by the costs of participating. Firstly, respondents described the number of polling stations as too small to accommodate the numbers that wanted to vote [1D-33, an NGO-worker in his 30s, described, he did not want to spend time on election day waiting for the entire day in line.

Even if the number of polling stations has increased in Moldova over time (Figure 1), this increase was not sufficient to meet the increasing demand to participate, based on the increasing number who eligible to vote. This provided a barrier to those actually participating regularly in Romanian elections by making the costs of participation beyond those many respondents were

willing to bear. This framed the normative sense of responsibility to vote in theoretical terms when in practice fewer respondents would vote, than portrayed it as a duty to vote, unless it was made easier and less time-consuming, as MD-37, a young female professional, remarked.

Beyond issues of voting supply, other respondents were more uncertain about whether they were eligible to vote. Again, MD-50 did not think he should be able to participate in a state, politically, in which he did not feel implicated. This was accompanied by the uncertainty as to whether he could actually vote with only a passport or whether he needed to have an ID card [MD-36 too].⁵⁹ This contrasted to the majority of respondents with Romanian citizenship who were more aware of their simple eligibility to vote, i.e. that Romanian did not require an internal passport (which does not exist), ID card or evidence of Romanian residency to vote, since reacquisition of Romanian citizenship and evidence of holding a Romanian passport were sufficient to register to vote. That there were several respondents who were uncertain of their eligibility to vote demonstrated further informational deficit among the body citizenry of Romanian/Moldovan dual citizens residing in Moldova.

As much as respondents expressed, normatively, their sense of obligation to vote, and to give back to Băsescu by voting for him, there were barriers that had, and might, inhibit their participation in Romanian elections, arising from the number of polling booths and, for some respondents, a lack of clarity concerning their eligibility to vote. The increased presence of Romanian politicians, on the left and right of Romanian party spectrum, via local visits and offices, would indicate a desire to shore up this informational uncertainty, regarding eligibility and candidate preference. However, the key constraint remained the available supply of voting opportunities, an issue of concern not just for Romanian extra-territorial politics in Moldova but for the enfranchisement of Romanias diaspora more widely.

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This article discussed the extra-territorialization of Romanian politics via the creation of an extra-territorial citizenry, and demos, in Moldova. Using a rich inductive and agent-centered approach, the empirical section avoided inferring much causality in terms of how who the respondents were affected their experiences and motivations. Rather, the paper addressed three dimensions that arose from across the sample (regardless of gender, age, profession or engagement in Moldovan politics): *voting obligations*, *preferences* and *intentions*.

In terms of *obligations*, the article argued that political participation via voting was framed as a necessary obligation stemming from citizenship. In terms of *preferences*, respondents wanted to give back to those who directly attributed to facilitating citizenship/redobândire (Băsescu). Băsescu could construct himself as a charismatic figure of extra-territorial Romanian politics within Moldova, against a distrust of other figures, such as Victor Ponta (PSD), who respondents did not

⁵⁹However Romania does permit anyone with a Romanian passport or ID card to vote in elections in and outside Romania.

believe would advocate enough for Moldova. This charisma honed by Bănescu was cultivated while suffering from a lack of popular support at home, in which Bănescu faced two impeachment referenda. However, in terms of *intentions*, these practices were constrained by the opportunities and costs of voting (e.g. time), which in turn by constrained by the provision of sufficient polling stations in the Moldovan constituency. The number of polling booths remains a key constraint of the actualization of *intentions*, i.e. the transformation of an individual who wants and feels obligated to vote, into an individual who actually participates in this political practice.

Conclusion

This article argues for understanding the duty to vote expressed by kin-citizens as well as how this can be mediated by a) a lack of supply of voting opportunities (polling stations) and b) a lack of information, because political socialization occurs outside of the kin-state. This article provides useful insights also for analyzing extra-territorial citizenship by demonstrating the performance of citizenship not (only) as a material practice, as citizenship acquisition from kin-states has often been conceived, but more as exemplifying the sense of rights and duties.⁶⁰ This duty to vote, even if it is offset by voting supply and information deficits, demonstrates a reciprocal relationship between the kin-state facilitating citizenship as a right and the citizen performing their citizenship duties by voting:

kin-state: right of citizenship \Leftrightarrow *kin citizen*: duty of participation

These findings speak, unexpectedly, to the deductive hypotheses concerning voting practices, conceived as benefits, costs and duties, discussed since Downs, and Riker and Ordeshook, and agrees too with Blais's analysis of voting as a duty. However, this sense of duty was expressed differently from that conceptualized by Blais who argued that it concerned a desire to uphold, through participation, values of democracy. Rather, this article has shown more the sense of obligation of citizenship, expressed as reciprocal rights and duties, rather than as political values.

The key difference between this article and previous analyses is the extra-territorial dimension where those voting acquired citizenship from a state in which they did not reside. This differs in important ways from diaspora analyses of citizenship. Rather than demonstrating existing domestic voting cleavages, which in turn is argued as not changing the polity,⁶¹ kin citizens *do* redefine the existing polity as actors who are creating political preferences, tabula rasa, following citizenship acquisition. This creates kin citizens with an obligation to participate but with different concerns and interests (e.g. interests linked to their home-state), to resident citizens of the kin-state, and demonstrates a redefinition of existing polities, and a willingness of politicians to engage in this process of redefinition because of the votes that can be won by doing so. Thus, it is important to

⁶⁰Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class."

⁶¹Ahmadov and Sasse, "Migrants' regional allegiances in homeland elections," 1788.

go further in exploring the political practices of these co-ethnic communities, who stand apart from diaspora voting practices explored elsewhere, and demonstrate that with the extra-territorialization of citizenship,⁶² comes the extra-territorialization of political participation, and thus the demos and site of electoral politics. Moreover, politically, enfranchisement of kin-citizens is expanding, for example with the upgrading of Hungary's Status Law to citizenship status for external communities of co-ethnic Hungarians (e.g. in Romania and Slovakia).

This article serves as a starting point for researching, beyond the cases of Romania and from an agent-centered perspective, how and why those who have acquired kin-state citizenship then participate in kin-state elections, demonstrating the importance of a sense of duty to participate. While this finding, empirically, is restricted to this context of this extra-territorial puzzle, this bottom-up approach provides insights that could be tested deductively and comparatively, over time and across different cases, by trying to systematize the sense of duty both in terms of domestic and extra-territorial political practices.

⁶²Ragazzi and Balalovska, *Diaspora Politics and Post-Territorial Citizenship in Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia*.

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