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Making Democratic Citizens: The Effects of Migration Experience on Political Attitudes in Central and Eastern Europe

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Abstract

This article examines the effects of migration experience on political attitudes in Central and Eastern European countries. The rationale for this quest is the hypothesis that contact with democratic contexts translates into democratic political attitudes, for which evidence is so far inconclusive. In this article, we are interested to see whether migrants returning from Western countries display different political attitudes than their fellow nonmigrant citizens. The analysis of survey data shows that migration experience diversifies the array of political attitudes: Although migrants are more likely to trust EU institutions and to try to convince friends in political discussions, they do not differ from nonmigrants in their attitudes toward domestic institutions. Based on earlier works on determinants of political attitudes, the authors argue that migration experience has a significant effect only when these attitudes are related to objects that are associated with improvements in the migrants' material and cognitive status.

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Migration research has shown that migration matters. Because of the arrival of migrants, policies (Emmenegger & Careja, in press; Geddes, 2003; Ruiz, 2007) and public attitudes in host countries change (Zick, Pettigrew, & Wagner, 2008). It has been shown that the development paths of host and home countries are affected (de Haas, 2005; Martin, 1992) and that the economic and social status of migrants undergoes significant changes (Harris & Todaro, 1970; van Meeteren, Engbersen, & van San, 2009). Most of this research focuses on permanent migration. Recently, however, temporary migration has been brought under the spotlight.[1] Temporary migrants emigrate in search for work and return periodically to their home countries. Most studies targeting this group explore topics such as the economic consequences of, or the reasons for migration (Co, Gang, & Yun, 2000; Epstein & Radu, 2007; Wallace & Stola, 2001). A promising, although still underresearched, direction investigates the change in their political values. This change has been documented with evidence from domestic migration (McMahon, Heath, Harrop, & Curtice, 1992) and from long-established emigration areas, such as Mexico (Pérez-Armendáriz & Crow, 2010). As Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) has recently emerged as a space of return and temporary migration, this article investigates if and how such migration experience influences the political attitudes of CEE citizens.

This article has a twofold aim. First, it closes a gap in the migration literature by addressing the question of whether migrants returning from democratic countries display different political orientations than nonmigrants. Second, it contributes to the research on formation of political attitudes, which remains to be relevant in CEE, not only for the democracy-building in these countries, but also for building the European citizenry and for ensuring the legitimacy of the European institutional and political construction.

Political attitudes are determined by individual socioeconomic characteristics (Almond & Verba, 1989) and by the institutional context (Anderson & Tverdova, 2001). Personal experiences, such as participation in the "nuts and bolts" of associations, have also been found to influence political attitudes (Bădescu, Sum, & Uslaner, 2004). It is argued that migration experience in democratic contexts matters too, but the evidence so far is inconclusive. Several studies of Latin American migrants to the United States have shown

that "on average, the attitudes of return migrants are more democratic than those of their co-nationals without any type of migration experience" (Pérez-Armendáriz & Crow, 2010, p. 123; also see Camp, 2003; de la Garza & Yetim, 2003; Levitt, 1998). However, Bădescu (2004) did not find similar results on a Romanian sample. He concluded that "migrants are no better or worse than others [i.e., nonmigrants] with respect of most measures of political culture" (p. 17).

Given this contradictory evidence, and given the continued relevance of the issue of determinants of political attitudes, we use a cross-national survey to analyze whether the political attitudes and behaviors of CEE citizens with migration experience in Western democratic countries differ from those of their nonmigrating fellow citizens and from those of the CEE migrants to less democratic countries. We focus on three basic political attitudes (Almond & Verba, 1989): attitudes vis-à-vis the regime, political interest, and political participation.

The decision to migrate for work is largely motivated by economic reasons (Borjas, 1999; Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2008). Although not explicitly sought after, changes in migrants' political attitudes are also likely to occur. Migration improves the material and cognitive situation of individuals (i.e., better economic status and more knowledge; Epstein & Radu, 2007; Pantoja & Segura, 2003), two factors that have been repeatedly identified as determinants of political attitudes and behaviors. It has been shown that improvements of status are associated with expression of more liberal economic views and more democratic political attitudes (Mishler & Rose, 2001; Schäfer, in press). If migration brings economic improvements, it is likely that migrants express positive attitudes toward the contexts perceived as contributing to this positive outcome. It has also been shown that higher levels of knowledge are associated with higher levels of political interest and participation (e.g., Almond & Verba, 1989). Migration experience has been found to have an impact on the role individuals assume in communities (Levitt, 1998), indicating that it changes individuals' sense of internal and external political efficacy. Thus, we expect to observe differences between migrants and nonmigrants in their attitudes related to (a) the institutional context influencing work mobility and (b) their personal status among peers. Drawing on findings that show that contact with democratic polities induces democratic political attitudes and behaviors (Pérez-Armendáriz & Crow, 2010), we expect to observe stronger effects on political attitudes in the case of migrants to established democracies compared to migrants to young democracies.

This article makes two contributions to the existing literature. First, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first cross-country comparative study of

return labor migrants' political attitudes. Migrants are a group notoriously difficult to capture in surveys, and therefore survey data are rare. We use the 2002 Candidate Countries Eurobarometer (CCEB), which identifies return migrants among its respondents and contains political attitudes questions. Second, it contributes to the political culture literature. As democracies consolidate only when citizens adopt democratic norms and behaviors (Linz & Stephan, 1996), it is relevant to explore whether the direct contact with democratic contexts influences the political attitudes of CEE citizens. In the wider European context, the issue of political attitudes is also relevant, as the EU counts on the support of the citizens of its new member states for its future development and also needs to build its legitimacy in the eyes of these citizens. We find a differentiated relationship between migration and political attitudes. Although migrants and nonmigrants do not differ with respect to attitudes toward domestic politics, we find systematic differences concerning political participation, satisfaction with how democracy works, and orientations toward international politics. We also observe differences between migrants to established democracies and migrants to young democracies. Thus, this article brings evidence that migration experience to democratic countries diversifies the political attitudes of CEE citizens and creates a pool of support for EU.

The article is organized as follows. The next part draws on previous research to discuss the relationship between migration experience and political attitudes of migrants. The third section develops theoretical expectations concerning the impact of migration experience on individuals' political attitudes. Subsequently, data sources and the operationalization of variables are discussed. The fifth part presents the empirical analysis. A final section concludes.

Migration and Political Attitudes

The recent wave of East–West temporary migration in Europe has produced significant research on determinants and patterns of migration (Boswell, 2008; Morawska, 2001; Radu, 2008; Sandu, 2005; Wallace & Stola, 2001), on the impact of labor migration on individuals' financial and occupational status (Co et al., 2000; Coulon & Piracha, 2005; Epstein & Radu, 2007), and on family structures, gender relations and development of children (Boyle & Halfacree, 1999; Loue, 2009; Open Society Foundation, 2007). Its effects on labor market policies and social policies of receiving countries (Emmenegger & Careja, in press; Kahanec & Zimmermann, 2009; Kvist, 2004) have also been scrutinized.

In spite of this abundance of studies, some areas, such as the impact of migration experience on migrants' political attitudes, remain largely virgin land. Although the political culture of migrants to European countries has been studied as part of their integration in host societies (Vogel & Leiprecht, 2006), the values these migrants take back to their home countries have received disproportionally little attention. The study of Bădescu (2004) on a Romanian sample is a noteworthy exception. However, to the best of our knowledge, cross-country studies concerning political attitudes of temporary CEE migrants are absent.

As de Haas (2010) aptly noted, migration rarely benefits from integrative theories, with the notable exception of those focusing on its economic determinants and impact. However, findings from previous migration and political attitudes research can be used to derive implications concerning the effects of migration on the political attitudes of immigrants.

First, migration is a means to access an institutional context favorable to the development and expression of political attitudes. There are numerous examples of immigrants who mobilize in their host countries to attain political goals in their host and home countries. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) analyzed the political activism of Turks and Kurds. Morales and Morariu (2011) showed that the links with the home country have a differentiated impact on migrants' political integration in their host country. Rivera-Salgado (2003) discussed the 1997 mobilization of Mexican farm workers in the United States, who used resources for political expression provided by the American context to demand of the Mexican government to recognize the agreement on culture and indigenous autonomy. Immigrants who flee dictatorships, such as citizens of North Korea or Cuba, use the democratic setting of their host countries to expose the excesses of dictators (Amnesty International, Boswell & Curtis, 1984). This evidence shows that immigrants who find themselves in contexts that allow political expression tend to mobilize politically. Relevant for the argument of this article is that such activism takes place even when the migrants are not fully endowed with political rights in their host countries.

Second, migration is a process through which individuals increase personal economic resources. The increase in the material well-being of immigrants compared to their nonmigrant peers (de Haas, 2005; Epstein & Radu, 2007) translates into an increased likelihood to report satisfaction with the current personal economic condition (Bălțătescu, 2007). Research has shown that better-off individuals in Eastern Europe are more likely to support the market economy and democracy, to express interest in politics, and to display more internal efficacy (Kunioka & Woller, 1999; Mishler & Rose, 2001). Thus, since migration improves individuals' economic situation, it can be

expected that migrants differ in their political attitudes toward the context (institutions) perceived as the source of this improvement compared to nonmigrants.

Third, migration is a process through which individuals come in contact with a new environment, which opens their eyes to a different reality. Migrants can compare the host countries with their home countries under aspects such as societal tolerance, functioning of the administrative system, functioning of the justice system, and overall well-being (Bălțătescu, 2007). This comparison may be favorable or unfavorable to the home countries and is likely to influence the attitudes the migrants express vis-à-vis the domestic political institutions. In addition, migration increases individuals' knowledge about the world, and the feeling of knowing more can influence the perception about one's own ability to understand politics (internal political efficacy; Pantoja & Segura, 2003). Thus, because of this accumulation of new information and experience, which can be conceptualized as a cognitive personal improvement, migrants' political attitudes are likely to differ from the ones of nonmigrants.

Fourth, migration is a means to take hold of new opportunities, such as employment abroad regulations. EU citizens have the right to work in any of the member states. In 2002, when the Eurobarometer survey was conducted, the temporary work migration from the then-future member states from CEE was governed by special rules, such as special conventions between EU member states and the candidate countries. Similar rules existed among CEE countries themselves with respect to the right of their citizens to work within each other's territory. Benefitting from these regulations is likely to give migrants a taste of what integration into EU would mean for their own chances to access the much larger labor market. This experience is likely to shape migrants' attitudes toward the EU.

Although this discussion has presented several reasons why the migration experience can be expected to change the political attitudes of migrants, other arguments point in a different direction. First, existing networks influence the choice of place of destination. It has been shown that migrants cluster in ethnic communities (Bauer, Epstein, & Gang, 2002; Cognilio, 2003) and have limited contact with the host society. In addition, although their social and economic integration is mediated by various civic associations, their political engagement is limited by institutional and legal factors. Migrants do not have the right to vote in national elections, unless they become citizens of the host country. Their right to vote in local elections, which is granted under EU law, is conditioned by their duration of stay (Vogel & Leiprecht, 2006). In this context, short-term migrants, circular migrants, and temporary migrants are more likely

to interact with associations and institutions that deal with social or economic problems, whereas their connection to the political life in their host country is at best limited. These findings suggest that the effect of the migration experience on migrants' political attitudes is likely to be rather weak.

Second, political attitudes of Eastern European citizens have been shown to be relatively stable over time. They tend to express support for democracy and satisfaction with how democracy works in their countries and to distrust domestic institutions. This pattern is observed both in early surveys and in later ones (Linz & Stepan, 1996; Mishler & Rose, 1997; Rose, 2007). Early life socialization and evaluation of contemporary performance of government have been found to have direct effects on trust in institutions (Mishler & Rose, 1997), whereas support for democracy has been related to comparisons of the new political regime with the communist one, to respondents' social capital (Kunioka & Woller, 1999) or to the types of channels that allow participation in the political process (Criado & Herreros, 2007). This type of evidence suggests that political attitudes are strongly embedded in individuals' experience with the home country's political system, and therefore it is likely that any impact the migration experience might have is rather weak, especially with regard to attitudes toward domestic institutions.

Summing up, from existing research no decisive conclusion concerning the impact of migration on political attitudes of migrants can be drawn. There are strong indications that the migration experience matters. Although the direction of its effect can be either positive or negative, for the argument of this article the important point is that the political attitudes of migrants *differ* from those of nonmigrants. Even the evidence that points at the resilience of political attitudes to personal experiences such as migration does not completely rule out an effect. It rather suggests the possibility of weak effects. Therefore, further investigation is required.

Political Attitudes of CEE Return Migrants

CEE temporary labor migration is motivated by economic reasons and not by political ones (Borjas, 1999; Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2008). Therefore, we assume that in the premigration period there are no systematic differences between migrants and nonmigrants with respect to their political attitudes. However, as the previous section showed, there is evidence suggesting that the political attitudes of immigrants change following migration. This is an explorative study of political attitudes of Eastern European migrants compared to nonmigrants, with a data set comprising all CEE countries, which asks political attitudes questions and identifies individuals with working

experience abroad. Among the vast array of such attitudes, we analyze three, which are largely recognized as basic political dimensions of democratic citizenship: attitudes toward the regime (satisfaction and trust), political interest, and political participation (Almond & Verba, 1989).

This section presents the more specific theoretical expectations concerning return migrants' political attitudes. To observe the possibility of a differentiated relationship between migration and political attitudes, we distinguish between general political attitudes (satisfaction with how democracy works, talking politics, and convincing friends), political attitudes toward domestic politics and institutions (trust in government, interest in domestic political news, voting in national elections), and political attitudes toward international politics and institutions (trust in EU institutions, interest in international political news, intention to vote in European Parliament elections). We distinguish between domestic and international dimensions of political attitudes because CEE citizens are citizens not only of their own countries, but also of the EU. Therefore, they are expected to develop political attitudes toward EU institutions. These attitudes derive from individuals' experience with the EU and, in their turn, enforce the legitimacy of the system.

The first set of indicators refers to the political system, and comprises satisfaction with how democracy works and institutional trust. Without a pool of support a political system cannot endure. The sources of this support are multiple, but two of them stand out: an overall evaluation of how the system (i.e., democracy) works and a more specific evaluation of the trustworthiness of political institutions. In democracies it is expected that this support is not blind:

> Democracy requires trust but it also presupposes an active and vigilant citizenry with a healthy skepticism of government and a willingness, should the need arise, to suspend trust and assert control over government—at a minimum by replacing the government of the day. (Mishler & Rose, 1997, p. 419)

The two dimensions capture this duality: Although "satisfaction with how democracy works" captures the overall evaluation of the regime, "trust in institutions" captures the more critical performance evaluation. Good individual economic circumstances have been found to have a positive effect on evaluations of how democracy works (Hoffebert & Klingemann, 1999; Schäfer, in press). Therefore, as migrants are persons who benefitted from the freedom to move and improved their economic situation, we expect them to evaluate differently from nonmigrants how democracy works. By contrast,

trust in domestic institutions is influenced by the functioning and output of these institutions, mediated by individuals' perceptions (Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001). Thus, because of the fact that performance of domestic institutions is assessed largely independent of migration experiences, we do not expect a difference between the two groups in what concerns the expressed trust in domestic political institutions.

The second dimension is political interest. Active citizens are interested in public issues and keep themselves informed. Migration experience provides individuals with firsthand information about other countries and increases their confidence that they can understand and deal with complex situations (Williams & Baláž, 2006). In other words, migration experience boosts one's own perception about accumulated knowledge and internal efficacy. This perception translates into increased interest in politics, manifested through consumption of political news and engagement in political discussions. Thus, we expect migrants to differ from nonmigrants with respect to these characteristics.

The third dimension refers to conventional political participation. Although the spectrum of participatory activities has multiplied in the past decades (Dalton, 2000), voting remains the essential political activity for democratic citizens. Trying to convince friends is another dimension of participation and captures the extent to which the respondents transmit political opinions. Based on the assumption that the migration experience makes individuals more self-confident (Aguilar, 1999; Akgündüz, 2008, p. 63; Williams & Baláž, 2006) and more politically active (Morales & Morariu, 2009), we expect migrants to be more likely than nonmigrants to vote in national elections and to try to convince their friends to change their political opinions. It may be argued that self-confidence is a characteristic that helps individuals migrate in the first place. We maintain that this self-selection effect does not distort the direction of this relationship but enforces it because the confident migrants might become even more confident and the shy migrants might become more assertive.

So far we have argued that the self-improvement (economic and cognitive) acquired through migration influences the political attitudes of migrants vis-à-vis the political sphere in general and increases their political participation. A similar argument can be formulated concerning attitudes toward international political actors. Migrating to work in a foreign country is the direct consequence of the opportunities created by EU rules and regulations, embodied in its institutions. To the extent that migration to work is internalized as a cause of personal improvement, both in economic and cognitive terms, we expect migrants to express more positive attitudes than nonmigrants vis-à-vis the EU. More specifically, we expect them to express more trust in EU institutions, more interest in international political news (as

experience outside the country increases information and knowledge), and a stronger intention to vote in European Parliament elections (as EU institutions and regulations help them to improve their economic situation).

Given the fact that migration to democratic countries has been found to stimulate the political activism of migrants (Boswell & Curtis, 1984; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Rivera-Salgado, 2003), we ask ourselves whether the political attitudes of CEE migrants differ in function of the level of democracy in their host countries. To answer this question, we compare migrants to established democracies to migrants to newly democratic countries. In our sample, the question concerning the county of migration lists as possible destinations not only Western countries, but also the CEE countries. Thus, for example, a Romanian migrant can look for work either in one of the countries of the former communist bloc (largely west of Romania) or in a country of Western Europe. For our analysis, the first case will be considered as migration to a newly democratic country and the second case as migration to an established democracy. Because our distinction overlaps largely with an economic one (between high- and medium-income countries), it could be argued that observed differences are the result of the economic differences between host countries. Although valid, this criticism is counteracted by the perspective adopted by this article. We argue from the perspective of personal improvements brought by migration. Research has shown that work migration leads to perceived economic and cognitive improvements (relative to country of origin) regardless of whether the migration occurs in a high-income country or in a medium-income country (de Haas, 2005; Epstein & Radu, 2007). Thus, if migrants perceive personal improvements regardless of the income level of the host country, it is reasonable to assume that observed differences between migrants' political attitudes are influenced by the quality of democracy in the host country.

Democracy means not only a certain approach to politics, but also a certain approach to citizens. Although the new CEE democracies score high on political dimensions (political rights and institutions), almost on par with their Western counterparts, they consistently score lower on qualitative aspects of democracy, such as civil liberties, respect for individuals and corruption. We argue that although temporary migrants are less likely to come in contact with the political institutions of their host countries, they regularly interact with institutions of their host countries, which shape the quality of democracies, such as bureaucracy, social services or law enforcement. This contact transmits a certain image of the host country, judged according to respect for the individuals and their liberties and rights and the rule of law. It is likely that this contact influences the attitudes migrants develop. We thus argue that the

qualitative difference between Western and Eastern democracies influences the political attitudes of migrants. We expect the effect of migration to Western countries on political attitudes to be stronger than the effect of migration to CEE countries.

Bălțătescu (2007) shows that migrants compare situations and display diversified attitudes as a function of these comparisons. For example, migrants to Western countries are more satisfied with their current situation as compared to their previous one, but at the same time they report less satisfaction with their situation in the host societies, which they compare to the native population. We argue that CEE return migrants make similar judgments and identify certain conditions as responsible for their improved (compared to that of nonmigrants) situation. First, the migration experience as such means access to information. Individuals, by the simple fact that they have migration experience, are likely to perceive themselves as more knowledgeable about different matters, not least political ones. Migration can provide a "perspective from abroad," prompting migrants to perceive themselves as more able to understand politics. Second, the EU is likely to be associated with the cause of the improvement to their material status as EU regulations allow them to travel and work abroad.

Summing up, we expect that migrants differ from nonmigrants on all attitudes concerning the international sphere (trust, participation, interest), on general measures of political interest and participation, and on measures of participation in national elections and interest in domestic politics. We do not expect differences in attitudes concerning domestic institutions. Moreover, we hypothesize that the effect of the migration experience to established democracies is stronger than the effect of migration to young democracies.

Data and Operationalization

For the purpose of this article, we define temporary migrants as individuals who have worked abroad for certain periods of time. They are an extremely interesting source of data, but are underrepresented in regular surveys because of their mobility, which makes them difficult to capture with standard sampling techniques (Groenewold & Bilsborrow, 2004). On average, in CEE national surveys only about 5% of respondents declare having work experience abroad, which is only a small proportion of those who actually work or have worked abroad, estimated at more than 10% of the labor force on the basis of surveys on intentions to migrate (Wallace, 1998; Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2008).

The CCEB 2002.2 provides data collected from 10,143 respondents from all 10 candidate countries from CEE. The questionnaire identifies labor migrants, but does not contain detailed questions as to duration of stay or reasons for return or repeated migration. We have several reasons to assume that respondents who declare having worked abroad have at least several months of such experience. First, in the same survey, more return migrants than respondents with no migration experience declare having a better life at the moment of the survey than 5 years before (46.4% among return migrants and 29.1% among nonmigrants, 46.2% among respondents with migration experience to established democracies, and 47.0% among respondents with migration experience to newly democratic countries). It is unlikely that this improvement follows very short periods of work abroad. In addition, temporary or seasonal contracts, which is the most common form of official work migration for Eastern Europeans, are offered for periods of up to 1 year. Although not very long, this time span is long enough to give migrants the possibility to get to know the host country. Moreover, it is quite common for migrants to secure subsequent temporary contracts with the same employer or in the same country. Thus, overall, these migrants spend relatively long periods of time in contact with democratic societies. In any case, the eventual presence of return migrants with very short durations of stay in the sample, to which our argument does not apply, is likely to weaken the observed effects of migration experience on democratic attitudes. Thus, we are following a conservative strategy and are more likely to underestimate than to overestimate the strength of the effect of the migration experience on political attitudes.

The migration experience to established democracies is captured by the number of Western European countries in which respondents worked during the past two years.[2] The variable was created by summing up the responses and ranges from 0 (worked in no foreign country) to 18 (worked in 18 countries).[3] The variable was recoded into a dummy variable: 0 for no work experience abroad and 1 for work experience in one or more countries. Among the CCEB respondents, 3.48% reported work experience in Western European countries. Migration experience to new democracies is captured by a dummy variable reflecting whether respondents have worked in a CEE country during the past 2 years but not in Western European countries.[4] Only 0.9% reported work abroad experience in CEE countries.

General regime support is measured using the respondents' assessment of how democracy works in their countries. This variable is measured on a 4-point scale ranging from *very satisfied* to *not at all satisfied*. We dichotomize the variable, with 1 indicating *fairly* or *very satisfied* and 0 otherwise. Trust in institutions is captured by the question of whether respondents tend to trust

certain institutions. Answers are measured with two categories, *tend to trust* (coded 1) and *tend not to trust* (coded zero). We measure trust in government (as representative for domestic political institutions) and trust in the EU (as the external institution most influential for the lives of CEE citizens).

Interest in politics is captured by three different variables: how frequently the respondents discuss political matters with friends (overall political interest) and how much attention they pay to news concerning domestic and international topics. Respondents who frequently discuss political matters have been coded as having a high level of overall political interest, and 0 otherwise. Political interest in particular topics has been operationalized using the question, "In general, do you pay attention to news about each of the following?" Respondents who pay a lot of attention to local or national politics ($\alpha = .76$) have been coded as having a high level of interest in domestic politics. Respondents who pay a lot of attention to foreign policy and the EU ($\alpha = .72$) in the news have been coded as having a high level of interest in international politics.

Political participation is operationalized using three variables. The first one is participation in national elections, captured by a vote intention question. Respondents who do not intend to vote are coded 0, and respondents who intend to vote, including blank and protest votes, are coded 1. The second variable is participation in international elections, captured by a question asking for their intention to vote in the next European Parliament elections, measured by self-placement on a scale ranging from 1 (*will definitively not vote*) to 10 (*will definitively vote*). The variable has been recoded to distinguish between those respondents who plan to vote (6 or higher), coded 1, and those respondents who plan not to vote (5 or lower), coded 0. Finally, general political participation, that is, political participation outside voting, is captured by a question asking the respondents whether, when holding a strong opinion, they try to convince their friends to share their views. The 4-point scale, ranging from *often* to *never*, was recoded to distinguish between respondents who try to convince their friends *often* or *from time to time*, coded 1, and those who *rarely* or *never* do so.

In the subsequent empirical analysis, we estimate models for all nine dependent variable using logit regression (Long & Freese, 2006) with country fixed effects and robust standard errors. This is a particularly conservative estimation strategy (Maas & Hox, 2003), which maximizes our confidence in the robustness of our results. To keep the sample more homogeneous, we restrict the sample to the working-age population (16–64) not enrolled in schools at the time of the interview. This reduces the sample to 6,990 observations, of which 5.4% have declared having worked abroad and 4.2% and

1.2% have declared having worked in established democracies and new democracies, respectively, in the past 2 years.

We introduce several control variables in each regression model. These variables are age, education, gender, income, social class (seven categories), and a media use index (four categories). A preparatory analysis showed that these variables significantly affect the probability of being a temporary migrant.[5] Moreover, all these control variables have been highlighted in the literature as important determinants of migration decisions (e.g., Drinkwater, 2003; Krieger, 2004; Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2008) and of political attitudes (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995; Dalton, 2006; Gallego, 2007; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). By incorporating this large set of control variables, we attempt to identify the net effect of migration experience on political attitudes.

Respondents' education was operationalized using the question, "How old were you when you stopped full-time education?" Respondents who were still studying at the age of 20 or more were coded as highly educated. The operationalization of gender and age is straightforward. In the survey, household income was measured in country-specific income groups. We therefore first *z* standardized the responses in each country on their own and subsequently pooled the data. As a result, income measures relative within-country income differences, whereas country fixed effects control for between-country variation.[6] Social class was operationalized based on respondents' occupations and Eurobarometer's standard classification. Finally, the CCEB media use index measures the respondents' weekly media consumption.

Analysis

Table 1 displays the results of logit regressions of our nine dependent variables on the two dummy variables for migration experience, the set of control variables and country dummy variables. It shows a difference between migrants to established democracies and migrants to newly democratic countries. As expected, in the case of the former, some of the migrants' political attitudes analyzed are significantly different from those of nonmigrants. However, none of the attitudes displayed by the migrants to newly democratic countries differ significantly from those of their nonmigrant fellows. This result can be explained by the fact that the quality of democracy in the countries of migration does not differ dramatically from the quality of democracy in the home countries, especially under aspects such as individual rights and liberties and rule of law.

Table 1. The Effect of Migration Experience on Political Attitudes (odds ratios)

Dependent variable	Regime support			Political interest			Political participation		
	International	General	National	International	General	National	International	General	National
Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Migration experience									
Western democracies	1.521*	1.367*	0.972	1.497**	1.129	0.962	1.555*	1.728***	0.824
	(2.417)	(2.043)	(–0.179)	(2.729)	(0.657)	(–0.254)	(2.441)	(3.730)	(–0.992)
Newly democratic countries	0.948	0.891	0.928	1.164	1.590	1.075	0.802	1.416	0.839
	(–0.193)	(–0.404)	(–0.287)	(0.567)	(1.628)	(0.271)	(–0.776)	(1.267)	(–0.458)
Control variables									
Media use index	1.274***	1.194***	1.209***	1.653***	1.555***	1.919***	1.287***	1.211***	1.298***
	(–6.376)	(–4.989)	(–5.552)	(–14.574)	(–10.138)	(–19.038)	(–6.940)	(–5.815)	(–5.611)
Income	1.091***	1.054***	1.027†	1.091***	1.049**	1.053***	1.120***	1.062***	1.037†
	(5.684)	(3.779)	(1.960)	(6.592)	(2.939)	(3.879)	(7.538)	(4.680)	(1.920)
Gender (woman = 1)	0.940	0.919	0.964	0.732***	0.610***	0.773***	0.932	0.700***	1.000
	(–0.906)	(–1.339)	(–0.587)	(–5.151)	(–6.699)	(–4.227)	(–1.054)	(–6.128)	(0.003)

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Dependent variable	Regime support			Political interest			Political participation		
	International	General	National	International	General	National	International	General	National
Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Age	0.990**	0.984***	1.000	1.012***	1.033***	1.021***	0.997	1.001	1.011**
	(–3.074)	(–5.247)	(0.156)	(4.038)	(8.979)	(7.304)	(–1.051)	(0.278)	(2.791)
Education	1.143†	1.217**	1.115	1.609***	1.457***	1.401***	1.369***	1.165*	1.089
	(1.671)	(2.758)	(1.525)	(6.842)	(4.447)	(4.816)	(3.975)	(2.255)	(0.860)
Self-employed	0.958	0.852	1.028	1.360*	1.459*	1.426**	1.185	1.037	1.503*
	(–0.293)	(–1.228)	(0.205)	(2.324)	(2.376)	(2.646)	(1.120)	(0.286)	(2.045)
Manager	0.944	0.923	1.034	1.242†	1.109	1.423**	0.927	1.069	1.072
	(–0.427)	(–0.695)	(0.284)	(1.818)	(0.701)	(2.991)	(–0.192)	(0.582)	(0.421)
White collar worker	Reference category								
Manual worker	0.858	0.777*	0.877	1.073	1.088	1.091	0.927	0.970	0.916
	(–1.295)	(–2.428)	(–1.238)	(0.663)	(0.613)	(0.833)	(–0.648)	(–0.299)	(–0.605)
Housekeeper	0.844	0.736†	1.318†	1.046	1.009	1.000	0.846	0.784	1.039
	(–0.932)	(–1.817)	(1.675)	(0.264)	(0.036)	(0.000)	(–0.947)	(–1.497)	(0.171)
Unemployed	0.988	0.607***	0.862	1.122	1.434*	1.001	1.035	1.183	0.806
	(–0.089)	(–3.903)	(–1.192)	(0.935)	(2.284)	(0.005)	(0.254)	(1.424)	(–1.327)

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Dependent variable	Regime support			Political interest			Political participation		
	International	General	National	International	General	National	International	General	National
Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Retired	1.031	0.949	1.181	1.375**	1.011	1.202	1.029	0.941	0.979
	(0.221)	(–0.425)	(1.350)	(2.591)	(0.074)	(1.498)	(0.209)	(–0.505)	(–0.125)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pseudo R^2	.087	.060	.050	.088	.085	.112	.070	.049	.105
Adj. Count R^2	.153	.037	.101	.153	.019	.301	.041	.086	.026
N	4,442	5,415	5,123	5,560	5,575	5,580	5,088	5,521	4,413

Logit regressions with country dummies and robust standard errors (Huber–White–Sandwich estimator). Country dummies not reported because of space restrictions. *T* values are in parentheses.
$^{\dagger}p < .10$. $^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

More precisely, Table 1 shows that respondents with migration experience to established democracies are characterized by higher levels of trust in international institutions such as the European Union (Model 1) and more interest in international politics (Model 4), whereas they are also more likely to participate in European Parliament elections (Model 7) than respondents without migration experience and respondents with migration experience to new democracies. In substantive terms, the odds of trusting international institutions increase by 52.1% if the respondent has been working in established democracies at least once in the past 2 years, whereas the odds of being interested in international politics increase by 49.7% and the odds of participating in European Parliament elections increase by 55.5%.[7] In contrast, migration experience (both to established and to new democracies) does not affect trust in national government (Model 3), interest in domestic politics (Model 6), or the intention to participate in national elections (Model 9). In all three cases, the two migration experience dummy variables are far from significantly different from zero. Thus, these findings show that the migration experience has a differentiated effect on democratic attitudes: It has a significant effect only when respondents have a migration experience to established democracies and when these attitudes are related to the migration experience and the resulting improvements in the migrants' material and cognitive status.

As regards general democratic attitudes, Table 1 shows that the effect of migration experience to established democracies is located somewhere between the effects on the international and the domestic variants of the three dimensions of democratic citizenship. Respondents with migration experience to established democracies are more satisfied with the way democracy works in their country (Model 2). However, this effect is only narrowly significant ($t = 2.04$) and the substantive effect is smaller than in the case of trust in the European Union (the odds of being satisfied with the way democracy works increase by 36.7%).[8] At the same time, return migrants are not significantly more interested in politics in general (Model 5). Although the coefficient is positive, it is not significantly different from zero.

Finally, we observe that respondents with migration experience to established democracies attempt more often to persuade their friends to share their political views (Model 8). The relationship is highly significant ($t = 3.73$) and the substantive effect considerable (the odds increase by 72.8%). The magnitude of this effect is somewhat surprising, and with the data at hand we cannot advance a comprehensive explanation. We can advance punctual explanations though, to be tested with future research. In the theoretical part, we argue that migration experience makes individuals more self-confident (Aguilar, 1999; Akgündüz, 2008). Experience in a country where respect for

individuals is the norm is likely to increase migrants' self-confidence, which leads them to try more actively to influence their friends. However, it might be also possible that self-confidence makes individuals migrate. Considering that these two effects are mutually reinforcing (self-confident individuals are more likely to migrate, whereas the migration experience makes them even more self-confident), it is no surprise that the statistical relationship between migration experience and attempting to persuade people to share one's views—which presupposes a high level of self-confidence—turns out to be highly significant.

Turning to the control variables, significant positive effects on the nine political attitudes can be observed in the case of media use (all models), income (all models), and education (Models 1, 2, and 4–8). In contrast, female respondents score significantly lower on four indicators, especially with regard to political interest (Models 4–6 and 8). Age has a positive effect on political interest (Models 4–6) and participation in national elections (Model 9), but is significantly associated with lower levels of regime support (Models 1 and 2). Self-employed respondents, managers, and to a certain extent unemployed and retired respondents are relatively interested in politics. In contrast, manual workers and unemployed respondents are characterized by lower levels of regime support. Finally, social class seems to have no clear effect on political participation.

To sum up, the survey data analyzed indicate a differentiated impact of migration experience on political attitudes. First, migration experience tends to have a positive and substantially strong impact on variables that tap into all aspects connected to EU, on satisfaction with how democracy works, and on convincing friends of certain political views. Second, the migration experience tends to have no effect on the variables that capture attitudes toward home polities, such as trust in domestic institutions, tendency to vote in national elections, and political interest in general and interest in domestic news in particular. The findings seem to suggest that migration changes only attitudes that are connected to contexts in which individuals perceive a personal improvement, either material or cognitive.

The difference between the migrants to established democracies and migrants to new democracies suggests that not every migration experience affects the political attitudes of migrants in significant ways. We suggest that it is the result of the difference in quality of democracies because migrants to established democracies associate the improvements in their material and cognitive status with the higher quality of democracy in the host countries, whereas in the case of migrants to newly democratic countries there are no significant differences with regard to quality of democracy between the home

and host countries. On the basis of our findings we thus conclude that the migration experience, and in particular the migration experience to established democracies, produces a more diversified palette of political attitudes.

Conclusion

Labor migration from Eastern to Western Europe is receiving increasing attention from policy makers and scholars alike. Most studies assess the individual and regional economic impact of labor migration, the reasons for migration, or the policy responses in receiving countries. Relatively little scholarly attention has been devoted to analyzing the impact of the migration experience on migrants' political attitudes and behavior. Using the 2002 CCEB, which contains questions regarding recent working abroad experience and political attitudes and behavior, this article attempts to cover this gap by analyzing the political attitudes of temporary labor migrants from 10 CEE countries.

The rationale for this quest is the hypothesis that migration experiences change the political values and behaviors of migrants. It has been shown that Mexicans living even a short period in the United States tend to display more democratic attitudes than nonmigrating Mexicans. We are interested to see whether a similar pattern holds in Europe as well. More precisely, we want to observe whether CEE temporary emigrants to Western democracies display different political attitudes than their nonmigrant fellows.

We rely on previous research that has demonstrated that migration is associated with perceived improvements in economic status and in one's own ability to understand the surrounding world, which we call "economic and cognitive improvements." We also rely on research that has shown that economic well-being and cognition are two major factors that influence political attitudes. We tie these two strands of research arguing that migration, through the cognitive and economic improvements it brings, influences the political attitudes of migrants.

Our empirical analysis shows that, compared to nonmigrants, migrants evaluate more positively the way democracy works in their own countries, express more trust in EU, are more interested in news concerning EU and foreign policy matters, try more often to convince their friends in political discussions, and are more likely to vote in European Parliament elections. In contrast, we observe no significant differences between migrants and nonmigrants concerning trust in domestic institutions, participation in political discussions, interest in domestic news, and voting in national institutions. These findings reflect the case of migrants returning from established democracies. The political attitudes of migrants returning from new democracies do not

significantly differ from those of their nonmigrant fellow citizens. This indicates that not every migration experience influences the political attitudes of migrants, although it changes their economic status. Only migration to established democracies has a visible effect because only in this case return migrants associate the perceived economic and cognitive improvements with the higher quality of democracy in the host countries. Overall, the findings indicate that the migration experience to fully democratic countries has a diversifying effect on the political attitudes of migrants.

These findings do not change but add to what is already known about migrants. At the individual level, we show that migrants not only become aware of new political objects (such as the EU and its institutions), but also quickly develop political opinions and behaviors related to them. At a more general level, our findings show that migration can contribute to an increase in support for the EU. In other words, the new member states might provide the EU with a pool of supporters, given a good management of labor mobility from these countries.

We conclude by drawing some implications for future research. As a general observation, investigating the determinants of democratic political attitudes is relevant for researchers and policy makers concerned with increasing the democratic quality of citizenry and has immediate implications for the democratization efforts in the new EU members and the EU neighboring countries. Our findings indicate that the political attitudes that citizens adopt or develop because of the migration experience are complex enough to deserve further attention. We suggest that more consistent findings could be generated if special surveys were designed to catch the rather elusive group of return migrants, as our findings have to be qualified because of the small sample size. In addition to sampling methods designed to increase the representation of migrants, these surveys should contain batteries of questions tapping their attitudes, values, and behavior. Moreover, findings obtained from survey analysis should be complemented with qualitative studies on the political values of migrants. We believe this to be the optimal way to capture the mechanisms through which migrants form their opinions and their influence on their nonmigrant fellow citizens.

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Notes

1. There are several types of temporary migration: return migration (one time move abroad and return to home country), repeat migration (moves between home country and different host countries), circular migration (continuous move between home and one host country; Epstein & Radu, 2007). In this article we use the term *return migration* to refer to all these forms, as the data do not allow us to follow this classification.
2. These countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.
3. Looking at declared working experience in all 18 countries, we identify three persons who mention having worked in 18 countries and one in 14 countries. It is highly unlikely that someone has worked in more than 10 countries during a 2-year period. Moreover, even if correctly declared, such a high number of working-abroad experiences would imply that each of these stays did not last very long. As a consequence, these working abroad experiences would be qualitatively different from long-term stays in one country. Therefore, for both reasons, in the final analysis, these answers were discarded.
4. These countries are Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Turkey.
5. In preparatory models using rare events logit (King & Zeng, 1999), fixed country effects, and robust standard errors we analyzed the determinants of migration experience. We found that return migrants tend to be male, young, and better-off in terms of household income and education. They are more often self-employed, but also unemployed or housekeepers. The latter indicates that some return migrants have not yet managed to find a new job in their home country. In contrast, marital status, size of community and whether the respondent is the main contributor to the household income do not affect the probability of migration experience. Media use does not affect the probability to migrate, but has a strong effect on political attitudes. Results can be obtained from the authors on request.
6. The incorporation of a control variable for household income leads to a reduction in the number of observations by 18.5%. As household income is a highly significant predictor of migration experience, we opt for incorporating the variable in the regression models. Note that the omission of a control for household income does not substantively alter the results.

7. Odds correspond to the probability of outcome 1 divided by the probability of outcome 0. For instance, in a room with 7 women and 3 men, the odds of randomly selecting a female person are 0.7/0.3 = 2.333. This can be read as a 2.333 to 1 probability of randomly selecting a female person. Odds have been calculated using SPost (Long & Freese, 2006).
8. That respondents with migration experience to established democracies are more satisfied with the way democracy works in their country, although they do not express more trust in domestic institutions, might look puzzling at first sight. However, it should be kept in mind that migrants, while being critical of their own governments' ability to cope with problems, also experience the more problematic aspects of the long-established democracies and evaluate the political regimes of their own countries in less negative terms than do the nonmigrants, who compare them to an ideal (Mishler & Rose, 1996; Waldron-Moore, 1999). However, this more realistic assessment of the way democracy works in Western societies need not stop them from expressing criticism of the specific way domestic governments cope with problems.

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