Does international migration affect political opinions?
Evidence from Moldova

Ruxanda Berlinschi

KU Leuven, Campus Brussels

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Moldova

Geo-politics:

- landlocked between Romania and Ukraine
- 3.5 mln people (Moldovans, Russians, Ukranians, Gagauz)
- independent from URSS since 1991
- since independence: Russia or EU?

Emigration:

- Almost no emigration during URSS
- Massive emigration after the Russian financial crisis in 1998

    40% working age population currently abroad

    1/3: West (Romania, Italy, Portugal, France…)

    2/3: East (Russia, Ukraine …)

Research Question

How is emigration affecting political opinions in Moldova?

Related literature

Social remittances: transmission of values, norms, ideas through international migrants

Spilimbergo (2009).

Perez-Armendariz & Crow (2009).

Batista & Vicente (2011).

Chauvet and Mercier (2013).

Beine et al (2013).

Mahmoud et al. (2013).

Data

- Nov 2012 survey by Barometer of Public Opinion, representative sample, N=1237.

    political opinions

    working experience abroad

    demographic, socio-economic characteristics

- Population census 2004

    emigrants by destination in each district→IV

Empirical framework: dependent variables

Three categories of political opinions:

1. External policy preferences: Russia versus EU

2. Democratic attitudes

3. Internal policy preferences

External policy preferences

1. If next Sunday there was a referendum regarding Moldova's European Union (EU) accession, what would be your vote ?

2. If next Sunday there was a referendum regarding Moldova's Customs Union (CU) accession, what would be your vote ?

    (pro, against, I do not know, I would not participate)

→ dependent variables:

pro_EU dummy (0-1)

pro_CU dummy (0-1)

pro-West measure (0-4)

External policy preferences

Complementary measures

1. If next Sunday there were Parliamentary elections, for which party would you vote?

       ->Communist_socialist dummy

2. How much do you trust Vladimir Putin?

       ->Putin_trust dummy

Democratic attitudes

1. If next Sunday there were parliamentary elections, would you go vote? (5 point scale)

   → dummy Vote

2. In your opinion, is Moldova governed by people's will?
   (yes, no, I do not know)

   → dummy Ppl_gvn

3. How satisfied are you with government's policy performance (5 point scale, 12 policy areas)

   →scale of satisfaction with government performance

Internal policy preferences

What should be done to improve socio-economic situation in Moldova?

(top 3 out of 12 possible priorities chosen: improving functioning of legislation, encouraging FDI, encouraging industry development, giving more power to local administration, combating crime, improving property protection....)

→12 dummies: issue top three priority.

Migration

Have you ever worked abroad after 1991?
 (up to 3 destinations)

Destinations classified in East and West based on geographic position wrt Moldova.

→Dummies: east

             west

             east_west

             no migration→control group

District-level diaspora from 2004 population census, classified East and West, (% of district population)

       →instrument for individual migration.

Summary statistics: socio demographic caracteristics

	Non migrants	Return migrants east	Return migrants west	Return migrants east and west	Pearson's Chi Square test of independence
Sample size	904	220	83	30	
Female (%)	68.69	37.27	48.19	23.33	97.77***
Revenue (scale 1-12)	4.87	4.98	5.67	5.52	73.39***
Romanian language (%)	74.89	77.73	85.54	93.33	10.01**
Age					155.12***
18-29	16.04	22.27	20.48	13.33	
30-44	14.93	44.09	31.33	40.00	
45-59	28.54	26.82	28.92	36.67	
60+	40.49	6.82	19.28	10.00	
Rural (%)	52.65	60.00	38.55	63.33	12.58***
Completed higher education (%)	17.37	13.18	20.48	23.33	3.93

Summary statistics: EU versus CU

	Non migrants	Return migrants east	Return migrants west	Return migrants east and west	Pearson's Chi Square test of independence
Sample size	904	220	83	30	
EU accession (%)					26.61***
For	51.39	47.03	74.70	75.86	
Against	30.74	35.62	16.87	13.79	
Do not know or would not participate	17.87	17.35	8.43	10.34	
CU accession (%)					34.75***
For	54.71	69.41	43.37	40.00	
Against	26.25	15.98	37.35	46.67	
Do not know or would not participate	15.17	10.05	12.05	10.00	

EU versus CU: baseline

	Pro_EU	Pro_CU
East	**-0.420***	**0.706***
	(0.234)	**(0.186)**
West	**0.804***	**-0.243**
	(0.290)	**(0.282)**
East_west	**0.527**	**-0.454**
	(0.440)	**(0.379)**
Romanian_language	1.657***	-1.522***
	(0.216)	(0.320)
Female	-0.045	-0.169
	(0.127)	(0.149)
Age	-0.186***	0.122*
	(0.041)	(0.063)
Revenue	0.014	-0.027
	(0.035)	(0.031)
Higher_edu	0.564***	-0.295**
	(0.153)	(0.142)
Rural	-0.096	-0.011
	(0.189)	(0.208)
cons	-0.745**	1.330***
	(0.337)	(0.322)
N	1,192	1,192

Binary logistic regression; robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parenthesis

EU versus CU: baseline

	PRO_west			
Female	0.074	-0.019	-0.006	0.020
	(0.93)	(0.21)	(0.06)	(0.20)
Age	-0.065	-0.115	-0.109	-0.105
	(2.00)*	(3.25)***	(3.05)***	(2.87)***
Revenue	0.028	0.023	0.021	0.019
	(1.32)	(1.06)	(0.95)	(0.92)
Romanian	1.279	1.264	1.250	1.240
	(6.89)***	(6.97)***	(6.96)***	(6.68)***
Higher_edu	0.332	0.311	0.318	0.312
	(3.80)***	(3.31)***	(3.39)***	(3.25)***
Rural	-0.029	-0.007	0.006	0.000
	(0.20)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.00)
East		**-0.521**	**-0.487**	**-0.459**
		(3.72)*	**(3.53)***	**(3.21)***
West			**0.340**	**0.364**
			(3.52)*	**(3.65)***
East_west				**0.531**
				(2.48)
Cons	0.889	1.207	1.168	1.137
	(5.19)***	(5.84)***	(5.68)***	(5.54)***
R^2	0.15	0.16	0.17	0.17
N	1,186	1,186	1,186	1,186

OLS; standard errors clustered at the district level in parenthesis

Predicting migration probability (1st stage IV)

	West	East
West_diaspora	**1,143.828***	229.087
	(418.140)	(337.089)
East_diaspora	**-29.592**	**15.275***
	(11.718)	**(4.299)**
Romanian	0.627	-0.106
	(0.417)	(0.182)
Female	-0.371	-1.417***
	(0.349)	(0.214)
Age	-0.097	-0.779***
	(0.123)	(0.093)
Revenue	0.116	-0.014
	(0.089)	(0.068)
Higher_edu	-0.229	-0.315
	(0.475)	(0.234)
Rural	-0.812***	-0.030
	(0.305)	(0.239)
Cons	-2.743**	0.419
	(1.134)	(0.776)
N	1,192	1,192
Chi2	39.72	206.54
P	0.00	0.00

Binary logistic regression. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parenthesis

EU versus CU: IV

	Pro_EU	Pro_CU
East_pr	**-0.614**	**-1.746**
	(0.987)	**(1.349)**
West_pr	**5.703****	**-5.167****
	(2.543)	**(2.604)**
Romanian	1.426***	-1.370***
	(0.242)	(0.307)
Female	0.004	-0.694**
	(0.239)	(0.347)
Age	-0.172*	-0.144
	(0.097)	(0.160)
Revenue	-0.017	-0.017
	(0.038)	(0.039)
Higher_edu	0.627***	-0.479***
	(0.144)	(0.159)
Rural	0.125	-0.127
	(0.185)	(0.218)
Cons	-0.873	3.048***
	(0.589)	(0.953)
N	1,192	1,192

Logistic regression. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parenthesis

EU versus CU: IV

	Pro_EU	Pro_CU
Pro_West_district	**0.281**	**-0.235**
	(0.221)	**(0.358)**
East_pr	**-0.343**	**-1.957**
	(0.877)	**(1.375)**
West_pr	**5.022****	**-4.681***
	(2.208)	**(2.682)**
Romanian	1.422***	-1.363***
	(0.242)	(0.338)
Female	0.040	-0.730**
	(0.224)	(0.344)
Age	-0.153*	-0.157
	(0.090)	(0.161)
Revenue	-0.014	-0.023
	(0.038)	(0.039)
Higher_edu	0.624***	-0.477***
	(0.145)	(0.157)
Rural	0.076	-0.082
	(0.161)	(0.208)
Cons	-1.460**	3.552***
	(0.622)	(1.258)
N	1,186	1,186

Logistic regression. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parenthesis

EU versus CU: IV

	Pro_West
Female	0.209
	(1.12)
Age	-0.012
	(0.15)
Revenue	0.004
	(0.14)
Romanian	1.099
	(5.65)***
Higher_edu	0.406
	(4.20)***
Rural	0.136
	(0.98)
West_pr	**4.211**
	(2.99)*
East_pr	**0.251**
	(0.33)
Cons	0.508
	(0.98)
R^2	0.16
N	1,186

OLS; standard errors clustered at the district level in parenthesis

Vote for communist or socialist party: baseline and IV

	(baseline)	(baseline)	(IV)
East	**-0.157**	**-0.132**	
	(0.203)	**(0.203)**	
West	**-0.765**	**-0.746**	
	(0.271)*	**(0.274)***	
East_west	-0.574		
	(0.528)		
Female	-0.078	-0.057	-0.206
	(0.189)	(0.189)	(0.328)
Higher_edu	-0.942	-0.946	-0.998
	(0.193)***	(0.190)***	(0.222)***
Romanian_language	-1.651	-1.661	-1.535
	(0.244)***	(0.242)***	(0.235)***
Age	0.097	0.103	0.033
	(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.132)
Rural	-0.032	-0.035	-0.137
	(0.137)	(0.137)	(0.157)
Revenue	-0.085	-0.085	-0.073
	(0.036)**	(0.035)**	(0.039)*
West_pr			**-3.889**
			(2.192)*
East_pr			**-0.649**
			(1.067)
Cons	0.646	0.611	1.092
	(0.342)*	(0.340)*	(0.704)

Putin trust: baseline and IV

	Putin_trust (baseline)	Putin_trust (IV)
East	**0.561****	
	(0.219)	
West	**0.074**	
	(0.447)	
Romanian	-1.720***	-1.607***
	(0.431)	(0.481)
Female	-0.066	0.250
	(0.151)	(0.300)
Age	-0.069	0.107
	(0.069)	(0.152)
Higher_edu	-0.278*	-0.215
	(0.151)	(0.156)
Revenue	-0.059	-0.034
	(0.039)	(0.047)
Rural	0.185	0.047
	(0.190)	(0.182)
West_pr		**-1.253**
		(2.309)
East_pr		**2.554****
		(1.238)
Cons	2.865***	1.766**
	(0.470)	(0.750)
N	1,192	1,192

Democratic attitudes/critical assesment: baseline and IV

	Vote (baseline)	Vote (IV)	People_gvn (baseline)	People_gvn (IV)
West_pr		**-1.650**		**-3.963**
		(2.828)		**(4.504)**
East_pr		**-2.100**		**0.795**
		(1.661)		**(1.299)**
Romanian	0.000	0.015	0.293	0.472
	(0.251)	(0.292)	(0.407)	(0.388)
Female	-0.608***	-0.933**	-0.085	0.028
	(0.183)	(0.406)	(0.145)	(0.247)
Age	-0.120	-0.279	-0.009	0.066
	(0.082)	(0.172)	(0.060)	(0.141)
Higher_edu	0.113	0.022	-0.224	-0.228
	(0.252)	(0.284)	(0.250)	(0.292)
Revenue	0.011	0.007	0.069	0.099**
	(0.036)	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.047)
Rural	-0.352	-0.353	0.620*	0.437
	(0.277)	(0.324)	(0.322)	(0.388)
East	**-0.459****		**-0.191**	
	(0.205)		**(0.228)**	
West	**-0.123**		**-0.624***	
	(0.339)		**(0.325)**	
Cons	2.621***	3.670***	-2.202***	-2.628**
	(0.553)	(1.053)	(0.605)	(1.226)
N	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192

Other results

- Top policy priorities: return migrants from the West are significanlty more likely to view FDI as a top priority (1% level), and functioning of legilsation (10% level) but not robust to IV estimation
- Satisfaction with government policies (12 areas): weak evidence of negative effect of western migration (baseline), positive effect of eastern migration (IV)

Other robustness checks:

- Individual controls: white collar job, internet access, internet as main information source=>higher pro_EU attitudes, West migration remains significant
- District level controls: economic activity, demographic structure, ethnic composition
- Pro-West measure: Stata's etregress

Conclusion

Working experience in a Western country.

increases support for EU accession

decreases support for CU accession

Working experience in an Eastern country

increases trust Vladimir Putin

no evidence causal effects on EU versus CU preference

Insufficient evidence of causal effects of migration on

voting; critical assesment of government performance

domestic policy priorities

THANK YOU