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Does working abroad affect political opinions? Evidence from Moldova

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Abstract

This paper investigates the effects of work experience abroad on political opinions using survey data from Moldova, a former soviet republic caught in an ideological battle between Russia and the West, with high emigration rates to both destinations. Contrarily to studies conducted in Africa or Latin America, we find no effect of past migration on democratic participation or on critical governance assessment. Likewise, no effect is found on domestic policy preferences. The one dimension strongly associated with migration experience is geopolitical preference, whereby return migrants from former Soviet countries are more likely to support closer ties with Russia, while return migrants from Western countries show higher support for EU integration, controlling for economic, demographic and ethnic confounding factors. For identification, we instrument individual migration with district level migrant networks. IV regressions show that only work experience in Western countries affects geopolitical preferences.

JEL Classification: P3, J61, D72, D83.

Key words: return migration, political opinions, Moldova, survey data.

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1. Introduction

How does international migration shape the spread of values, beliefs and ideologies across the globe? The number of people crossing national borders increases as access to information and communication technologies improve while poverty, insecurity, corruption, repression and other serious economic and political ills persist in some parts of the world. One important and often overlooked consequence of cross border movements people, along with effects on labour markets and public finances, is migrants' exposure to new information. In host countries, migrants have the opportunity to observe the functioning of different economic, political and social systems. They have access to new social and professional networks and media channels. They may also experience important changes in their economic or social status. Such life experiences may be sufficiently important to affect migrants' values, beliefs and norms in a variety of domains, from eating habits and gender roles, to social norms and political opinions. Ideas adopted abroad may then cross borders with return migration, and with migrants' participation networks, media and politics in their countries of origin.

The transmission of ideas by migrants to their countries of origin, sometimes called social remittances, has been documented by a small but growing body of economic research. This literature includes cross country and country-specific studies and has mostly focused on political opinions.²

A number of studies analysed the effects of emigration on politics and institutions using country-level data. Li and McHale (2006) were the first to propose such an empirical analysis. They found that skilled labour emigration in 1990 was positively associated with political institutions and negatively associated with economic institutions ten years later. Spilimbergo (2009) showed that student emigration to democratic countries improved democratic indicators at home for a panel of 183 countries, between 1960 and 2005. Beine and Sekkat (2013) examined the evolution of Kaufmann governance indicators between 1994 and 2004 as a function of emigration rates to OECD countries. They found positive effects of emigration on all institutional indicators except voice and accountability, for which the impact was negative. Effects were found to be stronger for skilled emigration. Mercier (2016) analysed the level of democracy in developing countries as a function of the head of state's study experience abroad over the period 1960-2004. She found that political leaders who studied abroad improved the level of democracy during their tenure, particularly for countries with poor initial democracy levels. Finally, a recent paper by Docquier et al. (2016) examined the relationship between

² One exception is Levitt (1998), who uses qualitative data from Miraflores, a high US emigration community in the Dominican Republic, suggesting that migrants transfer a wide range of values and behaviors, from clothing and housing styles, to trash management and attitudes towards women. Another exception is Beine et al (2013), who use cross country data to show that migrants transfer destination country fertility norms to their origin countries.

openness to emigration and institutional quality in developing countries over the last 30 years, extending the results of Spilimbergo (2009) to all types of migrants.

Other studies analysed transmission of political ideas by migrants using regional variation in migration and voting behavior in specific countries. Pfutze (2012) used data from the Mexican municipal elections to show that emigration significantly increased the probability for opposition parties to win elections for the first time. Chauvet and Mercier (2014) used locality level electoral and census data from Mali to show that return migration increased voter turnout and electoral competitiveness, particularly for migration to non-African countries and for localities where non-migrants were poorly educated. Omar Mahmoud et al. (2014) examined legislative election results at the locality level in Moldova, in relation with locality level emigration. The authors showed that the share of votes for the Communist Party were significantly lower in localities with higher emigration rates to Western countries.

Finally, some studies analysed individual political preferences in relation with individual or local-level migration. Fidrmuc and Doyle (2006) compared voting behaviour of emigrant and non-emigrant Czech and Polish citizens and found that emigrants living in countries with a long tradition of full or partial democracy and those living in economically advanced countries were more likely to vote for right wing parties in their home countries. Perez-Armendariz and Crow (2010) analysed survey data on political opinions of Mexican residents and found that Mexican respondents who had lived in the U.S. or Canada had a more critical assessment of Mexican government's record on rights. Mexican respondents with friends or relatives in the U.S. or Canada and those living in high migrant producing communities were more likely to participate in civic organizations and protests. A similar democratic participation effect has been found in Batista and Vicente (2011) using data from Cape Verde. The authors coupled survey data with an experimental framework showing respondents living in high emigration communities had higher demand for political accountability. The effect was bigger for US emigration than for emigration to Portugal and the return migrants enhanced political activism more than current migrants.

This paper analyses individual political preferences in relationship with individual migration using survey data from Moldova. The methodology used is closest to Perez-Armendariz and Crow (2010), who also use survey questions on political opinions as outcomes of interest. The geographic focus is closest to Omar Mahmoud et al (2014), who also use data from Moldova and differentiate between Eastern and Western migration.³

The main contribution of this paper lies in its focus on geopolitical ideas which, to the best of our knowledge, has not yet been analysed in relation with work experience abroad. While public opinion on geopolitics is only of secondary importance in many countries, which may explain why the issue has been neglected by the literature so far, it is of primary importance for countries which are at ideological and geopolitical crossroads, as it is the case of Moldova. Another contribution of this paper is testing whether patterns of political remittances which have been documented in other countries, such as increased political participation or critical

³ The classification of destination countries into East and West is based on the quality of institutions in Omar Mahmoud et al. (2014), while in this paper it is based solely on geography.

governance assessment, are also observed in the case of Moldova. Finally, we investigate migration effects on a number of domestic policy preferences which have not been tested in other papers.

We find that work experience abroad affects individual attitudes towards the two external powers competing for political and ideological influence in Moldova: the European Union and Russia. Work experience in Western countries increases support for accession to the European Union (EU) and decreases support for joining the Customs Union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan (CU). Work experience in former Soviet countries is correlated with geopolitical preferences, but we find no evidence of causal effects, except on trust in the Russian president Vladimir Putin. Contrarily to Mexico, Mali or Cape Verde, democratic participation and critical governance assessment are not affected by work experience abroad. The same is true for domestic policy preferences. Overall, our results confirm the existence of political remittances, but also emphasize the fact that they are context dependent. This calls for more country-specific studies and more in depth analyses, both theoretical and empirical, of the process by which migrants adopt ideas, values and beliefs and transmit them across the globe.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a brief overview of politics and emigration patterns in Moldova. Data and the empirical strategy are presented in section 3. Regression analysis for the effects of migration on geopolitical opinions are presented in section 4. Regression analysis for the effects of migration on other political opinions are presented in section 5. Section 6 concludes.

2. Politics and emigration patterns in Moldova

Moldova is a South Eastern European country of 3.5 million inhabitants, landlocked between Romania, an EU member state, and Ukraine, a former soviet republic whose EU aspirations have resulted in military conflict with Russia. Moldova shares a common language and strong cultural and historic ties with Romania, to which it belonged in the interwar period, before being annexed by the Soviet Union. An important number of Moldovan citizens also hold a Romanian passport and discussions of reunification with Romania have been on-going since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Romania is an important economic partner for Moldova, and so is Russia. Around 75% of the population are native Moldovans speaking Romanian at home, and 15 % are native Ukrainians or Russians, speaking Russian at home. The majority of the population can understand and has access to media in both languages. This cultural and geographic position has made Moldova a strategic battle ground for influence between the Kremlin and the West.

The EU has invested significant resources in the development of political, economic, and security ties with Moldova. Outcomes of these investments include a number of cooperation agreements aimed at aligning legislation, norms and standards to those of the EU in a wide range of domains, from respect for freedom of the media, rights of minorities and transparent elections, to origin of goods, competition and bankrupt legislation (European Union, 2005). The implementation of reforms has been supported with technical and financial assistance by the

EU, Moldova's most important donor. Progress is monitored by the EU delegation established in Moldova's capital.

The Kremlin has been using a mix of trade and military policies to maintain its economic, political and ideological influence in Moldova. Russia is a major export market for Moldovan agricultural products and its unique gas provider. Consequently, the Kremlin's trade policies such as embargos on agricultural product imports and gas export prices have a certain leverage on Moldovan policy makers. Moreover, Russian troops and military equipment are stationed in Transnistria, a breakaway territory situated at the border with Ukraine, populated by a majority of Russian speakers and receiving important financial support from Russia.

Public opinion in Moldova is split into three groups of comparable sizes: those with a strong preference for Moldova following a path towards EU integration, those with a strong preference for closer economic, political and cultural ties with Russia, and those with no strong preference for either of the two options.⁴ To a large extent this division is determined by ethnic and socio-demographic factors. Romanian speakers, younger and more educated Moldovans are generally more in favour of EU integration. Russian speakers and older generations are more likely to support close ties with Russia.⁵ Economic and political events, both foreign and domestic, such as economic crises in Europe, embargos imposed by Russia and corruption scandals involving leaders of pro-European or pro-Russia parties, also affect public support for the European and Russian paths, explaining why the size of the three groups varies non negligibly over time.⁶ Another factor which may be influencing public opinion on this issue is emigration.

Since independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and particularly after the Russian financial crisis in 1998, Moldova has been experiencing massive waves of emigration to Russia and to Western countries. Between six hundred thousand and one million Moldovans currently reside abroad, which represents up to a quarter of the total population and up to 40% of the working age population. Top destinations include Russia, Romania and Italy and other EU countries. Russia is an important destination because no visa is necessary to cross the border, travel by train is relatively inexpensive and a large majority of Moldovans have a good knowledge of the Russian language, customs and norms. An important proportion of migrants to Russia are males working in the construction sector, mostly informally. Italy is the first destination among Western European countries partly due to the similarity between Romanian and Italian languages and a certain cultural proximity. Many Moldovan migrants to Italy are women working in the informal service sector. Younger generations generally emigrate with the objective of settling abroad. Older generations generally emigrate only temporarily, in view of increasing consumption for family members remained at home and accumulating capital for retirement, housing investments and costly social events. This paper focuses on Moldovan

⁴ Data on the size of these groups for the period 2000-2015 can be found in the Barometer of Public Opinion, published yearly by the Institute for Public Policy.

⁵ For example, the 2015 Barometer of Public Opinion report indicates these patterns (Institute for Public Policy, 2015).

⁶ According to data from the Barometer of Public Opinion published yearly by the Institute for Public Policy, support for EU integration has fluctuated between 61% in 2002 and 44% in 2012, with a maximum of 76% in 2007. Variations of similar size are observed in public support for closer ties with Russia.

citizens who have worked abroad in the past, but had returned to Moldova at the time of the survey.

3. Data and empirical strategy

We use survey data collected in Moldova in 2012 by the Institute of Public Policy, an independent and non-profit research institute. A representative sample of the adult population was selected through stratified two stage random sampling, with districts and size of localities as stratification criteria.⁷ A total 1237 individuals were surveyed from 88 rural and urban localities, covering all districts and municipalities. Interviews were conducted at respondents' homes. The questionnaire was available in Romanian or Russian and the choice of the language was left to the respondent.

The survey included questions on respondent's political opinions, work experience abroad and socio-demographic characteristics. Our aim is to compare political opinions of respondents who have never worked abroad with political opinions of respondents who have worked in either Western countries or former Soviet countries. For dimensions in which differences in opinions are observed, we want to investigate whether they can be attributed to causal effects of having worked abroad.

We regress various measures of individual political opinions on migration experience, controlling for individual and district level confounding factors. For identification, we use district level migration networks to Western countries and to former Soviet countries as instruments for individual migration.

Dependent Variables

Several dimensions of individual political opinions are analysed in relation with migration experience and socio demographic characteristics. They include geopolitical opinions, political participation, critical assessment of governance and domestic policy preferences.

Geopolitical opinions are the main focus of our empirical analysis. The choice between a European path, leading to closer economic and political ties with the European Union and possibly EU integration in the long run, and a Russian path, leading to Customs Union (CU) accession and possibly Eurasian Union integration in the long run, has been central in the public debate since Moldova's independence from the Soviet Union. The path which the country will take will have important economic and institutional consequences and is still uncertain at the moment of writing this paper.⁸

⁷ Districts are the main administrative units in Moldova. The country is divided into 32 districts, three municipalities including the capital Chisinau, and two autonomous territorial units: Transnistria and Gagauzia. The two autonomous territorial units are not covered by the survey.

⁸The country has been governed by a pro-European coalition since 2009. A number of steps towards the European path have been implemented over this period, resulting in the signature of a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement and visa liberalization for short stays with the EU. However, members of the pro-European coalition have been involved in a number of high level corruption scandals, including the theft of one billion dollars, the equivalent of one eighth of GDP, from the country's banking system. New elections will be held in October 2016.

We analyse several complementary measures of geopolitical opinions. Three central measures are constructed based on how respondents declare that they would vote if referendums on EU accession and CU accession were organized. The dummy variable Pro EU indicates support for EU accession, the dummy variable Pro CU indicates support for joining the CU and the five point scale EU versus CU indicates the position of the respondent on the pro CU – pro EU preference spectrum, with higher values indicating stronger pro EU preferences. As complementary measures of geopolitical opinions, we analyse two additional dummy variables: Putin trust, indicating trust in the Russian president Vladimir Putin, and Communist socialist, indicating support for the communist or socialist parties, which are traditionally closer to Russia. Details of how these variables were constructed and descriptive statistics can be found in Table A2.

We measure democratic participation with the dummy Vote, indicating whether the respondent would vote in Parliamentary elections.⁹ Critical assessment of the democratic process is measured with the dummy People govern, indicating whether the respondent believes that the country is governed by people's will. Critical assessment of governance is measured by the scale variable Satisfaction governance, indicating respondent's satisfaction with policies implemented by the government in twelve policy areas. Details of how these variables were constructed and descriptive statistics can be found in Table A3.

Our measures of domestic policy preferences indicate which policies are considered top priorities in order to improve the socio-economic situation in the country. Respondents could choose up to three policies from a list of ten. For each policy, we created a dummy variable taking the value one if it was chosen as a top three priority by the respondent. Details of how these variables were constructed and descriptive statistics can be found in Table A4.

Explanatory variables of interest

Our central explanatory variables are dummies representing work experience abroad. Returnee East indicates work experience in a former Soviet country, Returnee West indicates work experience in a Western country and Returnee East and West indicates work experience in both former Soviet and Western countries. Destinations countries were grouped into East and West based on their geographical position with respect to Moldova. The reference category are respondents who have never worked abroad. Details of how these variables were constructed and descriptive statistics can be found in Table A1.

⁹ Moldova is a Parliamentary Republic and Parliamentary elections are the most important national level elections.

Control Variables

Standard control variables representing individual socio-demographic and ethnic characteristics, which are likely to affect both migration decisions and political preferences, are included in all regressions. Gender, age, language, education, revenue, and rural place of residence are controlled for in all regressions. Robustness checks include internet access, using internet as the main source of information, ethnicity, having a white collar job and being a farmer as additional controls. Details of how these variables were constructed and descriptive statistics can be found in Table A5.

Summary Statistics

Table 1 summarises individual socio-demographic characteristics according to work experience abroad. It indicates that individuals who have worked in the West are in a higher proportion Romanian speakers, living in urban areas, with higher education and higher revenues. Respondents who have worked in the East are more likely to be men without higher education and living in rural areas. Few individuals who were above 60 at the time of the survey have ever worked abroad.

Table 2 summarises individual geopolitical preferences according to work experience abroad. It indicates that return migrants from the West are significantly more likely to support EU accession, while return migrants from the East are significantly more likely to support CU accession.

Table 1
Socio-demographic characteristics of returnees and non-migrants

	Non migrants	Returnees East	Returnees West	Returnees 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

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Table 2
Geopolitical preferences of returnees and non-migrants

	Non migrants	Returnees East	Returnees West	Returnees East and West	Pearson's Chi Square test of independence
Sample size	904	220	83	30	
<i>EU accession (%)</i>					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	
<i>CU accession (%)</i>					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	

Note: *** $p < 0.01$. EU accession and CU accession respectively indicate how the respondent would vote in referendums on European Union and on Customs Union (with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) accession.

As socio-demographic characteristics are correlated with migration experience and they are also likely to affect political opinions, they need to be controlled for when analysing the effects of migration on political opinions. Regression results are presented and discussed in the following sections.

4. Regression results: geopolitical opinions and work experience abroad

This section presents regression results in which geopolitical preferences are explained by work experience abroad and control variables. Baseline results which do not deal with migration endogeneity are presented in section 4.1. The identification strategy and IV results are presented in section 4.2.

4.1 Baseline regressions

We start by analysing the effects of work experience abroad on the probability to support EU and CU accession, controlling for socio-demographic confounding factors. Logistic regression coefficients are presented in Table 3. They indicate that respondents who have had a working experience in the West are more likely to support EU accession compared to respondents who have never worked abroad. Likewise, return migrants from the East are more likely to support CU accession. Both effects are significant at the 1% level. No effect is found for the small category of respondents who have worked in both Eastern and Western destinations. Removing this small control group does not affect the coefficients of other explanatory variables.

Control variables show that younger, more educated and Romanian speaking respondents are significantly more likely to support EU accession. Language has the highest coefficient in terms of size. Gender, revenue and living in a rural area are not correlated with geopolitical preferences.

Table 3

Support for European Union and Customs Union accession and work experience abroad.

	Pro EU	Pro CU	Pro EU	Pro CU
Returnee East	-0.420* (0.234)	0.706*** (0.186)	-0.448* (0.231)	0.733*** (0.176)
Returnee West	0.804*** (0.290)	-0.243 (0.282)	0.783*** (0.282)	-0.222 (0.283)
Returnee East and West	0.527 (0.440)	-0.454 (0.379)		
Higher education	0.564*** (0.153)	-0.295** (0.142)	0.568*** (0.150)	-0.300** (0.139)
Romanian language	1.657*** (0.216)	-1.522*** (0.320)	1.666*** (0.210)	-1.530*** (0.315)
Age	-0.186*** (0.041)	0.122* (0.063)	-0.191*** (0.041)	0.127** (0.063)
Revenue	0.014 (0.035)	-0.027 (0.031)	0.015 (0.035)	-0.027 (0.032)
Female	-0.045 (0.127)	-0.169 (0.149)	-0.070 (0.122)	-0.144 (0.144)
Rural	-0.096 (0.189)	-0.011 (0.208)	-0.090 (0.186)	-0.016 (0.206)
Constant	-0.745** (0.337)	1.330*** (0.322)	-0.712** (0.348)	1.297*** (0.316)
Chi2	250.91	137.13	252.44	132.05
P	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
N	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Logistic regressions. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Returnee East, returnee West and returnee East and West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country, a Western country and both former Soviet and Western countries respectively. Pro EU and pro CU are dummies indicating that the respondent would vote in favour of accession to the European Union and Customs Union (with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Very similar results are obtained when using the EU versus CU five point scale instead of the dummy variables Pro EU and Pro CU (Table B1).

Table 4 presents regression results for the dependent variables Communist socialist and Putin trust. Results show that return migrants from the West are less likely to support the communist or socialist parties, but equally likely to trust Vladimir Putin. Revenue, higher education and Romanian language are strongly negatively associated with supporting the communist and socialist parties. Return migrants from former Soviet countries have higher trust levels in Vladimir Putin. Speaking Romanian and having higher education are negatively associated with trust in Vladimir Putin.¹⁰ Although the variables explained in these regressions represent dimensions of individual geopolitical ideas which are to some extent different from support for EU or CU accession, results are broadly consistent.

¹⁰If instead of the age variable we include a dummy for people older than 60, its coefficient is positive and significant at the 5% level, indicating that the oldest generation are the most likely to declare they would vote communist or socialist.

Table 4.

Support for the communist and socialist parties, trust in Vladimir Putin and work experience abroad.

	Communist socialist		Putin trust	
Returnee East	-0.157 (0.203)	-0.132 (0.203)	0.484** (0.216)	0.561** (0.219)
Returnee West	-0.765*** (0.271)	-0.746*** (0.274)	0.017 (0.446)	0.074 (0.447)
Returnee East and West	-0.574 (0.528)		-1.102*** (0.347)	
Higher education	-0.942*** (0.193)	-0.946*** (0.190)	-0.265* (0.150)	-0.278* (0.151)
Romanian language	-1.651*** (0.244)	-1.661*** (0.242)	-1.705*** (0.447)	-1.720*** (0.431)
Age	0.097 (0.068)	0.103 (0.067)	-0.084 (0.071)	-0.069 (0.069)
Revenue	-0.085** (0.036)	-0.085** (0.035)	-0.058 (0.038)	-0.059 (0.039)
Female	-0.078 (0.189)	-0.057 (0.189)	-0.141 (0.159)	-0.066 (0.151)
Rural	-0.032 (0.137)	-0.035 (0.137)	0.203 (0.200)	0.185 (0.190)
Constant	0.646* (0.342)	0.611* (0.340)	2.970*** (0.460)	2.865*** (0.470)
Chi2	233.04	234.51	86.08	84.42
P	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
N	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Logistic regressions; robust standard errors clustered at district level in parentheses. Returnee East, returnee West and returnee East and West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country, a Western country and both former Soviet and Western countries respectively. Communist socialist is a dummy indicating that the respondent would vote for the communist or socialist party in legislative elections. Putin trust is a dummy indicating that the respondent trusts Vladimir Putin very much or to some extent. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Tables B2 and B3 present regression results with additional individual level control variables. Results indicate that having internet access and using internet as the main source of information are strongly associated with being more in favour of EU accession, while they have no effect on support for CU accession. This suggest that any eventual effect of migration on geopolitical opinions does not operate through higher revenues financing access to new information through the internet. Being a farmer and having a white collar job are weakly associated with more pro EU attitudes. Support for EU accession is significantly higher among ethnic Moldovans and ethnic Romanians, while support for CU accession is significantly higher among ethnic Russians. The effects of work experience abroad are not altered by the inclusion of these additional controls.

The results presented in this section cannot be interpreted as causal effects of work experience abroad because unobserved individual characteristics may drive both migration decisions and geopolitical opinions. In particular, pro West individuals may be more likely to look for jobs in the West, while pro-Russia individuals may be more likely to look for jobs in Russia. In other words, regressions may suffer from an omitted variable bias, because we do not have measures of individual political opinions before emigration has taken place. While there is extensive evidence indicating that the large majority of Moldovan emigration is economically and not politically motivated, we cannot rule out the possibility that the

coefficients presented in this section are at least partly driven by migrant self-selection.

4.2 IV regressions

Our identification strategy consists in instrumenting individual migration with district level emigrant networks in Eastern and Western destinations. Networks are an important determinant of migration flows. By providing valuable information and contacts for finding jobs, housing and dealing with administrative hurdles, they reduce the costs and the risks of migration for individuals with emigrants in their personal network.¹¹ Remittances are sometimes used to finance emigration of other family members, while family reunification policies reduce administrative barriers to emigration for individuals with close family members working abroad. When the economic benefits of migration are visible to others, for example in the form of better quality housing or consumption of luxury goods, incentives to emigrate increase even for individuals with no emigrants in their personal network. We therefore expect individuals living in localities with stronger emigration rates to be more likely to emigrate. This link should be destination-specific, i.e. higher emigrant networks to Western countries in the locality should increase the probability for an individual to work in a Western country, and the same should be true for Eastern countries. We expect emigrant networks in the West to play a more important role in determining individual migration than migrant networks in former Soviet countries because financial, administrative and informational barriers to migration are stronger for Western destinations.

District level data on the number of persons leaving abroad by country of destination was taken from the 2004 population census. When constructing the measures for emigrant networks, the number of emigrants in each district was divided by the district population in order to proxy the probability for an individual to personally know someone established abroad or to observe the economic benefits of migration. Destination countries were grouped into East and West using the same classification as for the individual migration. We thus constructed two instruments, district diaspora West (2004) and district diaspora East (2004) for the two endogenous explanatory variables of interest, return East and return West. In absence of a third instrument, we cannot estimate a separate causal effect for the endogenous dummy variable Return East and West. This is a minor limitation, as the group of respondents who have worked in both eastern and western destinations only represents 30 out of 1237 observations, and this particular treatment, which did not show any robust effects in baseline regressions, is not a major point of interest for this paper. Baseline regressions have shown that including this treatment or leaving it out has no effect on the coefficients of other variables, therefore we drop this treatment from the IV regressions.¹²

First stage regression results are presented in Table C1. Both instruments are highly significant. As expected, Western diaspora has a higher influence on individual migration than

¹¹ Social norms for mutual help in Moldova often lead to second and even third degree network connections providing logistic, administrative and financial help to new coming migrants in destination countries.

¹² The respective observations remain included in the sample, thus the control group includes 904 individuals who have never worked abroad and 30 individuals who have worked in both Eastern and Western destinations.

Eastern Diaspora. An important diaspora network in the West highly increases the probability to have worked in the west, and it has a lower but significant negative effect on the probability to have work in the East. An important diaspora network in the East increases the probability to have worked in the East. The first condition for the validity of instruments is thus satisfied.

The second condition for the validity of instruments, i.e. lack of correlation with the error term, cannot formally be tested because the model is just identified. We will therefore discuss its plausibility based on theoretical arguments and additional robustness checks. Several possible issues with the validity of the two instruments come to mind. The first one is the possibility that emigrant networks affect the economy at the district level, for example through labour market or local market effects, with possible consequences on individual political preferences. In other words, diaspora networks might not be a valid instrument if they are correlated with omitted variables representing district level economic factors. In order to check whether this may be an issue, we add district-level indicators of economic activity to the explanatory variables in baseline regressions. Results indicate that district level economic indicators are not correlated with geopolitical preferences, thus they are unlikely to represent a significant omitted variable (Table B4). A second possible concern could be that district level demographic or ethnic distribution is correlated with both individual migration decisions and geopolitical preferences. Tables B5 and B6 show that district level ethnic and demographic composition do not affect individual foreign policy preferences when individual socio-demographics are controlled for. One final and important validity concern is the possibility that diaspora networks affect individual geopolitical opinions not only by affecting individual migration, but also by spreading relevant information at the district level. Such local diffusion of social remittances has indeed been documented in other contexts. In order to check whether this may be a concern, we constructed a measure of geopolitical preferences in respondent's district and checked whether it is correlated with the individual geopolitical preferences.¹³ We have tested the effect of district level geopolitical preferences both on the whole sample, and on the sample of individuals who have never migrated. Results presented in Table B7 indicate that geopolitical preferences in the district are not significant predictors of individual geopolitical preferences. In one specification only is the district average significant at the 10% level. The findings that district level geopolitical preferences have no effect on individual geopolitical opinions once individual migration is controlled for, and that they have no effect on geopolitical opinions for the individuals who have never migrated are consistent with the hypothesis that migrant networks affect individual geopolitical opinions through the individual migration decision rather than through diffusion of ideas at the locality level. We are therefore confident that district migrant networks are valid instruments for the individual migration decision. As an additional robustness check however, we will control for district level geopolitical preferences in IV regressions.

Table 5 presents IV regression results, where the probabilities of having worked in the West and East predicted in first stage regressions are included instead of the original migration variables. An interesting result comes out of these regressions. Work experience in former

¹³The measure is constructed as the average EU versus CU scale in respondent's district, excluding respondent's own observation.

Soviet countries loses its significance for predicting geopolitical preferences, while work experience in the West remains significant, with the expected sign. Robustness checks indicate that these results hold when controlling for district-level geopolitical preferences (Table B8) and when using an alternative estimation method (Table B9).¹⁴ These estimates suggest that the correlation between work experience in former Soviet countries and support for CU accession is mainly driven by migrant self-selection, while the correlation between pro EU preferences and work experience in the West is also driven by the effects of such work experiences on political preferences.

Table 5

Support for European Union and Customs Union accession and work experience abroad (IV second stage)

	Pro EU (IV logit)	Pro CU (IV logit)	EU versus CU (2SLS)
Returnee East IV	-0.614 (0.987)	-1.746 (1.349)	0.251 (0.751)
Returnee West IV	5.703** (2.543)	-5.167** (2.604)	4.211*** (1.409)
Higher education	0.627*** (0.144)	-0.479*** (0.159)	0.406*** (0.097)
Romanian language	1.426*** (0.242)	-1.370*** (0.307)	1.099*** (0.195)
Age	-0.172* (0.097)	-0.144 (0.160)	-0.012 (0.082)
Revenue	-0.017 (0.038)	-0.017 (0.039)	0.004 (0.026)
Female	0.004 (0.239)	-0.694** (0.347)	0.209 (0.186)
Rural	0.125 (0.185)	-0.127 (0.218)	0.136 (0.139)
Constant	-0.873 (0.589)	3.048*** (0.953)	0.508 (0.519)
Chi2	250.65	101.25	.
P	0.00	0.00	.
R-squared			0.16
N	1,192	1,192	1,186

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Returnee East IV and returnee West IV are predicted probabilities to have worked in a former Soviet country and in a Western country respectively (first stage regressions in Table C1). Pro EU and pro CU are dummies indicating that the respondent would vote in favour of accession to the European Union and Customs Union (with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) respectively. EU versus CU is a five point measure indicating respondents' position on the pro CU-pro EU preference spectrum. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

How can we explain the finding that work experience in the West affects migrants' geopolitical preferences, while no causal effects are found for work experience in the former Soviet Union? Consider a theoretical framework in which rational voters have incomplete information on the effects of various policy regimes on their payoff. Such voters use the information at their disposal to choose the policy regime which maximises their expected payoff. A life event such as work experience abroad may alter an individual's preferred policy regime through two different mechanisms: by changing the information available to the

¹⁴ The alternative method is STATA's `etregress` command.

individual or by changing the effects of certain policy regimes on the individual payoff. These mechanisms suggest two possible explanations for our findings.

The first explanation is related to changes in information for migrant individuals. Living in the West implies exposure to institutions, policies, values and norms which are very different from those prevalent in Moldova. Observing the functioning of Western societies, integrating social or professional networks and having access to Western media may represent information shocks which are sufficient for causing changes in migrants' political opinions. By contrast, due to the legacy of the Soviet Union, institutions, policies, values and norms prevalent in many former Soviet country are still relatively similar today. Therefore, work experience in another former Soviet country may generally not represent a significant information shock. In other words, political opinions are more likely to evolve when migrating to a country with sufficiently different institutions, policies and norms.

The second explanation is related to changes in payoff from certain policy regimes for migrant individuals. Work experience in the EU may increase individual payoff from free labour mobility with EU countries, while work experience in former Soviet countries may increase individual payoff from free labour with CU countries. Indeed, work experience in a foreign country is likely to increase the net benefits of re-emigrating to the same country, by reducing uncertainty, linguistic barriers, increasing relevant networks and job market experience. One important difference between the consequences of EU and CU accession for Moldovan citizens is that EU accession would reduce substantial labour mobility barriers to EU countries, while CU accession would have no such effects since labour mobility barriers are already low for former Soviet countries.¹⁵ This may explain why individuals who have worked in the EU have higher support for EU integration, while individuals who have worked in the East do not become more in favourable to CU accession.

As an attempt to investigate the relevance of these two explanations, we analysed respondents' answers to survey questions asking them to name the most important benefits of joining the EU and the CU respectively. Tables D1 and D2 show the distribution of responses to these questions according to respondent's migration experience. Several points are worth mentioning. In the case of EU accession, the most frequent responses are 'visa liberalisation', 'I do not know' and 'there are no benefits'. In the case of CU accession, the most frequent responses are 'cheaper energy', 'I do not know' and 'there are no benefits'. The distribution of responses indicates that free labour mobility is one important reason for supporting EU accession, while it is not the case for CU accession. Consistent with our second explanation, return migrants from the West are more likely to believe that visa liberalisation is the main advantage of joining the EU (26.5 % of them do so, compared to 17.1 % for non-migrants). Also consistent with our explanations, return migrants from the West are less likely to believe that there are no benefits (14.5% of them do so compared to 23.1% for non-migrants) or to state that they do not know what the benefits are (9.6% of them do so compared to 24.8% for non-migrants). As far as the advantages for joining the CU are concerned, only a small minority of respondents consider visa liberalisation to be the main benefit and this response is not more

¹⁵ At the time of the survey, visas were needed for Moldovan citizens visiting EU countries, even for short stays.

frequent among Eastern returnees. Cheaper energy is also chosen with a similar frequency by returnees from the East and non-migrants. It is the case however that return migrants from the East are less likely to believe there are no benefits of joining the CU (10% compared to 15% for non-migrants) and that they do not know what the benefits are (16% compared to 27% for non-migrants). These answer distributions are consistent with our hypothesis that return migrants from the West are more likely to support EU accession because their experience increases the valuation of free labour mobility with EU countries. However, given the low number of observations for each answer category, statistical tests cannot be performed in view of providing evidence of causal effects of migration on perceived benefits of EU and CU accession. This data limitation calls for more research in view of uncovering the mechanisms through which migration leads to changes in geopolitical preferences.

Table 6.

Support for the communist and socialist parties, trust in Vladimir Putin and work experience abroad (IV second stage).

	Communist socialist	Putin trust
Returnee East IV	-0.649 (1.067)	2.554** (1.238)
Returnee West IV	-3.889* (2.192)	-1.253 (2.309)
Higher education	-0.998*** (0.222)	-0.215 (0.156)
Romanian language	-1.535*** (0.235)	-1.607*** (0.481)
Age	0.033 (0.132)	0.107 (0.152)
Revenue	-0.073* (0.039)	-0.034 (0.047)
Female	-0.206 (0.328)	0.250 (0.300)
Rural	-0.137 (0.157)	0.047 (0.182)
Constant	1.092 (0.704)	1.766** (0.750)
Chi2	243.43	29.06
P	0.00	0.00
N	1,192	1,192

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Logistic regressions, robust standard errors clustered at district level in parentheses. Returnee East IV and returnee West IV are predicted probabilities to have worked in a former Soviet country and in a Western country respectively (first stage regressions in C1). Communist socialist is a dummy indicating that the respondent would vote for the communist or socialist party in legislative elections. Putin trust is a dummy indicating that the respondent trusts Vladimir Putin very much or to some extent. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Finally, we investigate the causal effects of migration on the other measures of geopolitical opinions: support for the communist or socialist party and trust in Vladimir Putin. Results presented in Table 6 indicate that western migration marginally decreases support for the communist and socialist parties and it has no effect on trust in Vladimir Putin. Eastern migration does not affect support for communist and socialist parties, but has a positive and significant effect on trust in Vladimir Putin. This result may be at odds with the lack of effect of Eastern

migration on support for closer relationships with Russia through CU accession. One possible explanation is that information exposure on Vladimir Putin's image in Russia is sufficiently different to trigger changes in the perceived image of this politician, while information on expected effects of CU accession is not sufficiently different to affect support for this policy regime.

5. Regression analysis: other political opinions and work experience abroad

This section presents a brief analysis of the relationship between other policy preferences and work experience abroad, both abstracting from and taking into account migration endogeneity.

Table 7 shows regression results for voting, critical assessment of the democratic process and satisfaction with governance performance. Baseline results indicate that respondents who have worked in a former Soviet country are less likely to vote, while respondents who have worked in the West are more critical towards the democratic process and less satisfied with governance performance. IV results show that these effects disappear when controlling for migration endogeneity, indicating that differences in political participation and critical governance assessment between migrants and non-migrants are likely to be driven by self-selection.

Regression results for domestic policy preferences are presented in tables B10 and B11. They indicate that work experience abroad is generally not significant for predicting which policies are viewed as top priorities, with two exceptions. Return migrants from the West are more likely to declare that encouraging foreign direct investment is a top priority, and the same is true for improving the functioning of legislation. These coefficients however lose their significance when controlling for migration endogeneity, suggesting that they are also driven by self-selection.

These results suggest that while migrants differ from non-migrants in terms of their political participation, critical governance assessment and domestic policy priorities, observed differences are likely to be driven by self-selection rather than by the migration experience.

Table 7

Political participation, critical governance assessment and work experience abroad.

	Vote (logit)	Vote (IV logit)	People govern (logit)	People govern (IV logit)	Satisfaction governmen t (OLS)	Satisfaction governmen t (2SLS)
Returnee East	-0.459** (0.205)		-0.191 (0.228)		-0.619 (0.438)	
Returnee West	-0.123 (0.339)		-0.624* (0.325)		-1.207* (0.699)	
Higher education	0.113 (0.252)	0.022 (0.284)	-0.224 (0.250)	-0.228 (0.292)	-0.842* (0.495)	-0.722 (0.654)
Romanian language	0.000 (0.251)	0.015 (0.292)	0.293 (0.407)	0.472 (0.388)	1.651*** (0.406)	1.538** (0.646)
Age	-0.120 (0.082)	-0.279 (0.172)	-0.009 (0.060)	0.066 (0.141)	-0.579** (0.231)	-0.325 (0.413)
Revenue	0.011 (0.036)	0.007 (0.043)	0.069 (0.044)	0.099** (0.047)	0.340*** (0.093)	0.341** (0.141)
Female	- 0.608*** (0.183)	-0.933** (0.406)	-0.085 (0.145)	0.028 (0.247)	-0.730* (0.364)	-0.205 (0.872)
rural	-0.352 (0.277)	-0.353 (0.324)	0.620* (0.322)	0.437 (0.388)	-0.027 (0.701)	0.078 (0.958)
Returnee East IV		-2.100 (1.661)		0.795 (1.299)		2.928 (12.626)
Returnee West IV		-1.650 (2.828)		-3.963 (4.504)		1.775 (3.639)
Constant	2.621*** (0.553)	3.670*** (1.053)	- 2.202** *	-2.628** (1.226)	6.173*** (0.900)	4.456* (2.601)
Chi2	19.64	20.61	18.18	21.03	0.05	0.05
P	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	777	777
N	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192	-0.619	

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Logistic regression; robust standard errors clustered at district level in parentheses. Vote is a dummy indicating that the respondent would certainly or probably vote in legislative elections. People govern is a dummy indicating that the respondent believes the country is governed by people's will. Satisfaction government is a 48 point scale indicating respondent's satisfaction with government's performance in 12 policy areas. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Returnee East IV and returnee West IV are predicted probabilities to have worked in a former Soviet country and in a Western country respectively (first stage regressions in Table C1). Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

6. Conclusion

Does working abroad have an influence on political opinions? In destination countries, migrants are exposed to a new environment in which institutions, legislation, media, values and norms may be notably different from those prevailing in origin countries. Such exposure may over time influence migrants' system of values and beliefs. In particular, political opinions may evolve following work experience in a foreign country.

We test this hypothesis by comparing political opinions of Moldovan citizens who have worked abroad in either Western or former Soviet countries, with political opinions of Moldovans who have never worked outside of Moldova. The main focus is on individual support for EU integration versus closer ties with Russia, a question which has been central in political debates since the country's independence from the Soviet Union.

We find strong and robust correlations between geo-political preferences and work experience abroad. Respondents who have worked in the West are significantly more likely to support EU integration, while respondents who have worked in a former Soviet country are more likely to support closer ties with Russia, controlling for relevant ethnic, demographic and economic confounding factors. When individual migration is instrumented with district level migration networks in order to deal with endogeneity, only work experience in the West shows a significant effect on geopolitical opinions. No causal effects are found for work experience in former Soviet countries, except increased levels of trust in the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

We discussed two possible explanations for the observed asymmetry in effects for Western and Eastern migration. The first explanation is related to information exposure. While living in the West implies exposure to very different institutions, values and norms, working in another former Soviet country does not provide a similar information shock for Moldovan citizens, due to the legacy of the Soviet Union. The second explanation is related to individual payoffs from European Union accession and from Customs Union accession. One important reason why Moldovans support EU integration is the removal of labour mobility barriers to EU countries. As labour mobility barriers are already very low for Russia and other former Soviet countries, this does not represent an important advantage of CU accession. Work experience in the West may increase individual's valuation of free labour mobility with EU countries by reducing the costs and increasing the benefits of re-emigration. We present some descriptive statistics supporting these explanations, but our data does not allow us to formally test their plausibility.

We do not find any evidence of causal effects of migration to Western democracies on critical assessment of governance or on willingness to vote, contrarily to what other studies have found for Cape Verde, Mexico or Mali. Likewise, no effects are found on domestic policy preferences. Moldovans who have worked in the West are more likely to rank foreign direct investment and legislation functioning as top priorities, and they are on average less satisfied with governance and the democratic process, but these differences seem to be driven by migrant self-selection rather than by causal effects of migration.

When putting our results in the perspective of previous findings on social remittances, one noteworthy insight is that the effects of migration on political opinions are context dependent. A related insight is the need to better understand when, why and how migrants adopt ideas, values and norms in destination countries. Theoretical and empirical research on this issue deserves further attention. Additionally to improving our understanding of the role played by migrants in the circulation of values, beliefs and ideologies across the world, such research

may lead to innovative recommendations for migrant integration policies in destination countries.

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Appendix A: Variables definitions and descriptive statistics

Table A1

Work experience abroad

Variable	Type	Survey Question	Answer coding	Mean	Std.dev.	Min	Max
Returnee East	Dummy		Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan → 1	0.18	0.38	0	1
			No experience or other countries → 0				
Returnee West	Dummy	Have you ever worked abroad after 1991?	Romania, Italy, France, Germany, UK, USA, Greece, Holland, Portugal, Spain, Czech Republic, Lithuania, New Zealand, Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Poland, Austria, Croatia, Sweden, Australia, Hungary, Poland → 1	0.07	0.25	0	1
		If yes, where?	No experience or other countries → 0				
Returnee East and West	Dummy		Work in experience at least one Eastern and one Western country → 1	0.02	0.15	0	1

Note: work experience in Turkey (10 observations), Israel (8 observations) were not classified in either category.

Table A2
Geopolitical preferences

Variable name	Type	Survey Question	Answer coding	Mean	Std.dev	Min	Max
Pro EU	Dummy	If next Sunday there was a referendum regarding Moldova's European Union accession, what would be your vote?	Yes→1 No, I do not know or and I would not participate→0	0.53	0.50	0	1
Pro CU	Dummy	If next Sunday there was a referendum regarding Moldova's Customs Union accession, what would be your vote?	Yes→1 No, I do not know or and I would not participate→0	0.56	0.50	0	1
EU versus CU	Scale 0-4	If next Sunday there was a referendum regarding Moldova's European Union accession, what would be your vote? If next Sunday there was a referendum regarding Moldova's Customs Union accession, what would be your vote?	pro CU and against EU→0 pro CU and undecided about EU→1 pro CU and pro EU→2 undecided about CU and pro EU→3 against CU and pro EU→4	1.92	1.47	0	4
Communist socialist	Dummy	If next Sunday there were Parliamentary elections, for which Party would you vote?	Socialist or Communist party→1 Other party→0	0.28	0.45	0	1
Putin trust	Dummy	How much do you trust Vladimir Putin?	Somewhat or very much→1 Not very much, not at all, I have not heard of him→0	0.74	0.44	0	1

Table A3

Political participation and critical governance assessment

Variable	Type	Survey Question	Answer coding	Mean	Std.dev	Min	Max
Vote	Dummy	If next Sunday there were Parliamentary elections, would you vote?	Certainly yes; probably yes→1 Probably no; certainly no→0	0.84	0.37	0	1
People govern	Dummy	Do you think the country is governed by people's will?	Yes→1 No; I do not know→0	0.19	0.39	0	1
Satisfaction government	Scale 0-48	How satisfied are you on a scale from 1 to 4 with government's performance in the following sectors: helping small farmers, improving private property protection, giving more powers to the local administration, fighting crime, improving the functioning of state institutions, changing governance, improving the functioning of legislation, improving private sector development, stimulating foreign direct investment and stimulating industrial development.	Sum of satisfaction levels for each policy. Higher values represent higher average satisfaction. Note: A factor and reliability analysis were conducted on the 12 variables representing satisfaction in 12 policy areas, indicating they can be grouped into one underlying dimension. Cronbach's alpha=0.914.	6.67	5.87	0	27

Table A4
Domestic policy preferences.

Variable	Answer Coding	Mean	Std.dev	Min	Max
State institutions	Improving activities of state institutions	0,13	0,33	0	1
Crime	Combating crime	0,26	0,44	0	1
Local administration	Empowering local administration	0,08	0,27	0	1
Property protection	Improving property protection	0,18	0,38	0	1
Small farmers	Helping small farmers	0,33	0,47	0	1
Industry	Supporting industrial development	0,38	0,49	0	1
FDI	Encouraging foreign direct investment	0,29	0,45	0	1
Private sector	Providing facilities to the private sector	0,21	0,41	0	1
State	Increasing involvement of state in the economy	0,29	0,46	0	1
Legislation	Improving legislation functioning	0,35	0,48	0	1

Note: All variables are dummies constructed based on the question: What should be done to improve the socio-economic situation in Moldova? Respondents could to choose up to 3 policy priorities. If a policy was indicated as a top 3 priority, the corresponding dummy variable received the value 1.

Table A5
Socio-demographic characteristics

Variable	Definition	Type	Mean	Std.dev	Min	Max
Romanian	interview is conducted in Romanian	dummy	0,77	0,42	0	1
Female	respondent is a woman	dummy	0,61	0,49	0	1
Age	age group	Scale (1-4)	2,76	1,09	1	4
Revenue	revenue group	Scale (1-12)	4,95	2,27	1	12
Higher education	completed higher education	dummy	0,17	0,38	0	1
Rural	lives in a rural area	dummy	0,53	0,50	0	1
Internet access	has internet access	dummy	0,41	0,49	0	1
Internet information	internet is the main source of information	dummy	0,11	0,31	0	1
White collar	white collar job	dummy	0,14	0,34	0	1
Farmer	works in farming sector	dummy	0,14	0,34	0	1

Appendix B: Additional regressions and robustness checks

Table B1

Position on the pro CU-pro EU preference spectrum and work experience abroad.

	EU versus CU			
Returnee East	-0.459*** (0.143)			-0.487*** (0.138)
Returnee West	0.364*** (0.100)	0.467*** (0.103)		0.340*** (0.097)
Returnee East and West	0.531** (0.214)	0.667*** (0.208)	0.628*** (0.206)	
Higher education	0.312*** (0.096)	0.330*** (0.090)	0.323*** (0.090)	0.318*** (0.094)
Romanian language	1.240*** (0.186)	1.246*** (0.190)	1.268*** (0.192)	1.250*** (0.180)
Age	-0.105*** (0.036)	-0.059* (0.033)	-0.063* (0.032)	-0.109*** (0.036)
Revenue	0.019 (0.021)	0.023 (0.021)	0.026 (0.021)	0.021 (0.022)
Female	0.020 (0.098)	0.109 (0.084)	0.098 (0.083)	-0.006 (0.093)
Rural	0.000 (0.139)	-0.016 (0.147)	-0.035 (0.147)	0.006 (0.137)
Constant	1.137*** (0.205)	0.848*** (0.168)	0.874*** (0.167)	1.168*** (0.206)
R^2	0.17	0.16	0.15	0.17
N	1,186	1,186	1,186	1,186

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; OLS. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. EU versus CU is a five point measure indicating respondents' position on the pro Customs Union-pro European Union spectrum. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Table B2

Support for European Union and Customs Union accession and work experience abroad including job type and information source as additional control variables.¹⁶

	Pro EU	Pro CU	Pro CU	Pro EU	Pro EU	Pro CU
Returnee East	-0.452** (0.225)	0.733*** (0.175)	0.722*** (0.173)	-0.438** (0.221)	-0.438** (0.221)	0.722*** (0.173)
Returnee West	0.743** (0.292)	-0.221 (0.279)	-0.231 (0.279)	0.752*** (0.288)	0.752*** (0.288)	-0.231 (0.279)
Higher education	0.475*** (0.161)	-0.281* (0.152)	-0.194 (0.150)	0.368** (0.155)	0.368** (0.155)	-0.194 (0.150)
Romanian language	1.685*** (0.215)	-1.524*** (0.318)	-1.526*** (0.307)	1.691*** (0.209)	1.691*** (0.209)	- 1.526*** (0.307)
Age	-0.120*** (0.045)	0.115 (0.073)	0.116 (0.073)	-0.119*** (0.045)	- (0.045)	0.116 (0.073)
Revenue	-0.005 (0.037)	-0.026 (0.034)	-0.017 (0.035)	-0.017 (0.039)	-0.017 (0.039)	-0.017 (0.035)
Female	-0.057 (0.118)	-0.148 (0.141)	-0.154 (0.140)	-0.048 (0.120)	-0.048 (0.120)	-0.154 (0.140)
Rural	-0.040 (0.182)	-0.026 (0.196)	-0.018 (0.196)	-0.049 (0.184)	-0.049 (0.184)	-0.018 (0.196)
Internet access	0.231** (0.118)	0.033 (0.168)	0.055 (0.170)	0.206* (0.118)	0.206* (0.118)	0.055 (0.170)
Internet information	0.477** (0.225)	-0.204 (0.208)	-0.191 (0.209)	0.467** (0.232)	0.467** (0.232)	-0.191 (0.209)
Farmer			-0.307 (0.207)	0.402* (0.226)		
White collar					0.402* (0.226)	-0.307 (0.207)
Constant	-0.981*** (0.353)	1.332*** (0.353)	1.303*** (0.357)	-0.953*** (0.356)	- (0.356)	1.303*** (0.357)
Chi2	300.60	146.44	257.73	311.99	311.99	257.73
P	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
N	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Logistic regressions. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Pro EU and pro CU are dummies indicating that the respondent would vote in favour of accession to the European Union and Customs Union (with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian. Internet access and internet information indicate that the respondent has access to the internet and uses internet as the main source of information respectively.

¹⁶ We have also tried controlling for being active in the labor market. This variable is not significant. Results are available upon request.

Table B3.

Support for European Union and Customs Union accession and work experience abroad including controls for the individual ethnic group.

	Pro EU	Pro EU	Pro EU	Pro CU	Pro CU	Pro CU
Returnee East	-0.452** (0.220)	-0.453** (0.222)	-0.452** (0.225)	0.735*** (0.173)	0.735*** (0.173)	0.732*** (0.174)
Returnee West	0.700** (0.279)	0.768*** (0.295)	0.743** (0.289)	-0.196 (0.283)	-0.237 (0.288)	-0.211 (0.276)
Higher education	0.424*** (0.162)	0.477*** (0.162)	0.474*** (0.159)	-0.242 (0.155)	-0.283* (0.154)	-0.266* (0.148)
Romanian language	1.087*** (0.275)	1.512*** (0.214)	1.683*** (0.251)	-0.999*** (0.301)	-1.340*** (0.223)	-1.448*** (0.327)
Age	-0.105** (0.046)	-0.115** (0.046)	-0.120*** (0.044)	0.104 (0.072)	0.111 (0.072)	0.110 (0.073)
Revenue	0.002 (0.036)	0.002 (0.037)	-0.005 (0.037)	-0.032 (0.033)	-0.033 (0.034)	-0.027 (0.034)
Female	-0.028 (0.117)	-0.038 (0.118)	-0.057 (0.118)	-0.172 (0.134)	-0.166 (0.136)	-0.148 (0.141)
rural	-0.031 (0.184)	-0.062 (0.183)	-0.040 (0.182)	-0.031 (0.199)	-0.005 (0.199)	-0.025 (0.195)
Internet access	0.209* (0.117)	0.213* (0.119)	0.231* (0.118)	0.054 (0.169)	0.054 (0.167)	0.035 (0.169)
Internet information	0.525** (0.220)	0.449** (0.221)	0.478** (0.221)	-0.234 (0.213)	-0.181 (0.205)	-0.220 (0.209)
Moldovan or Romanian	0.930*** (0.180)			-0.819*** (0.286)		
Russian		-0.776*** (0.254)			0.844*** (0.319)	
Ukrainian			-0.011 (0.253)			0.386 (0.302)
Constant	-1.362*** (0.327)	-0.837** (0.376)	-0.979*** (0.367)	1.658*** (0.449)	1.168*** (0.327)	1.264*** (0.347)
Chi2	386.68	331.79	303.69	144.70	178.44	153.97
P	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
N	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Logistic regressions. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Pro EU and pro CU are dummies indicating that the respondent would vote in favour of accession to the European Union and Customs Union (with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian. Internet access and internet information indicate that the respondent has access to the internet and uses internet as the main source of information respectively. Moldovan, Romanian, Russian and Ukrainian indicate respondent's ethnic group.

Table B4

Support for European Union and Customs Union accession and work experience abroad including controls for economic indicators at the district level.

	Pro EU	Pro CU
Returnee East	-0.407 (0.230)*	0.711 (0.176)***
Returnee West	0.739 (0.264)***	-0.223 (0.309)
Returnee East and West	0.610 (0.398)	-0.446 (0.365)
Romanian language	1.560 (0.267)***	-1.753 (0.304)***
Female	-0.048 (0.121)	-0.188 (0.141)
Age	-0.186 (0.038)***	0.106 (0.063)*
Higher education	0.564 (0.140)***	-0.388 (0.157)**
Revenue	0.021 (0.036)	-0.013 (0.037)
Rural	-0.138 (0.230)	0.034 (0.162)
Value production district	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Wage district	-0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Production units district	0.002 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.004)
Constant	0.588 (1.733)	-0.387 (1.477)
<i>N</i>	1,134	1,137

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Logistic regressions. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Value production unit district, wage district and production units districts measure the gross value added, average wage and the number of firms/production units in the district in 2012 (source: National Bureau of Statistics). Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Pro EU and pro CU are dummies indicating that the respondent would vote in favour of accession to the European Union and Customs Union (with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Table B5

Support for European Union and Customs Union accession and work experience abroad including controls for ethnic composition at the district level.

	Pro EU	Pro CU
Returnee East	-0.397 (0.220)*	0.678 (0.171)***
Returnee West	0.784 (0.270)***	-0.265 (0.299)
Returnee East and West	0.629 (0.405)	-0.454 (0.380)
Romanian language	1.516 (0.290)***	-1.667 (0.336)***
Female	-0.046 (0.124)	-0.189 (0.138)
Age	-0.175 (0.040)***	0.104 (0.064)
Higher education	0.551 (0.131)***	-0.389 (0.155)**
Revenue	0.005 (0.038)	-0.015 (0.036)
Rural	0.004 (0.224)	-0.061 (0.184)
Ukrainians district %	-0.016 (0.013)	0.020 (0.020)
Russians district%	0.010 (0.021)	-0.015 (0.021)
Gagauz district %	-0.010 (0.003)***	-0.007 (0.004)*
Constant	-0.589 (0.399)	1.475 (0.366)***
<i>N</i>	1,187	1,190

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Logistic regressions. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Pro EU and pro CU are dummies indicating that the respondent would vote in favour of accession to the European Union and Customs Union (with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian. Ukrainians district%, .Russians district % and Gagauz district % indicate the percentage of these ethnic groups in respondent's district (source: National Bureau of Statistics).

Table B6

Support for European Union and Customs Union accession and work experience abroad including controls for demographic composition at the district level.¹⁷

	Pro EU	Pro CU
Returnee East	-0.388 (0.229)*	0.678 (0.174)***
Returnee West	0.791 (0.283)***	-0.231 (0.290)
Returnee East and West	0.651 (0.413)	-0.457 (0.375)
Romanian language	1.658 (0.220)***	-1.546 (0.318)***
Female	-0.043 (0.125)	-0.191 (0.142)
Age	-0.165 (0.042)***	0.101 (0.065)
Higher education	0.553 (0.131)***	-0.388 (0.148)***
Revenue	0.009 (0.036)	-0.016 (0.034)
Rural	-0.016 (0.188)	-0.095 (0.206)
Population65+ district	-0.039 (0.038)	0.054 (0.048)
Constant	-0.423 (0.463)	0.882 (0.561)
<i>N</i>	1,187	1,190

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Logistic regressions. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Pro EU and pro CU are dummies indicating that the respondent would vote in favour of accession to the European Union and Customs Union (with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian. Population65+ district indicates the percentage of population in the district older than 65 (source: National Bureau of Statistics).

¹⁷ The results are robust to including dummies for all age groups categories.

Table B7

Support for European Union and Customs Union accession and work experience abroad including controls for geopolitical preferences at the district level

	Pro EU	Pro CU	Pro EU (sample of non-migrants)	Pro CU (sample of non-migrants)
Returnee East	-0.471** (0.223)	0.746*** (0.172)		
Returnee West	0.732*** (0.270)	-0.190 (0.296)		
Higher education	0.567*** (0.153)	-0.302** (0.139)	0.564*** (0.182)	-0.302 (0.232)
Romanian language	1.606*** (0.230)	-1.493*** (0.355)	1.523*** (0.244)	-1.603*** (0.358)
Age	-0.198*** (0.040)	0.132** (0.062)	-0.176*** (0.038)	0.138** (0.067)
Revenue	0.009 (0.034)	-0.026 (0.030)	0.058 (0.044)	0.003 (0.031)
Female	-0.070 (0.124)	-0.153 (0.145)	-0.310** (0.152)	-0.265 (0.207)
Rural	-0.116 (0.168)	0.009 (0.188)	0.055 (0.204)	0.028 (0.196)
EU versus CU district (excluding own)	0.386* (0.227)	-0.268 (0.332)	0.348 (0.224)	-0.186 (0.331)
Constant	-1.312*** (0.500)	1.743** (0.746)	-1.424*** (0.521)	1.604** (0.703)
Chi2	300.51	152.32	173.32	90.39
P	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
N	1,186	1,186	873	873

Logistic regressions. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. EU versus CU is a five point measure indicating respondents' position on the pro CU-pro EU preference spectrum. EU versus CU district (excluding own) is the district average of the variable EU versus CU, excluding the respondent's own observation to avoid endogeneity. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Pro EU and pro CU are dummies indicating that the respondent would vote in favour of accession to the European Union and Customs Union (with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Table B8.

Support for European Union and Customs Union accession and work experience abroad including controls for geopolitical preferences at the district level (second stage IV)

	Pro EU (IV logit)	Pro CU (IV logit)	EU versus CU (2SLS)
Return East IV	-0.343 (0.877)	-1.957 (1.375)	0.465 (0.748)
Return West IV	5.022** (2.208)	-4.681* (2.682)	3.570** (1.425)
Higher education	0.624*** (0.145)	-0.477*** (0.157)	0.403*** (0.096)
Romanian language	1.422*** (0.242)	-1.363*** (0.338)	1.076*** (0.216)
Age	-0.153* (0.090)	-0.157 (0.161)	0.001 (0.081)
Revenue	-0.014 (0.038)	-0.023 (0.039)	0.006 (0.025)
Female	0.040 (0.224)	-0.730** (0.344)	0.235 (0.182)
rural	0.076 (0.161)	-0.082 (0.208)	0.081 (0.117)
EU versus CU district (excluding own)	0.281 (0.221)	-0.235 (0.358)	0.217 (0.219)
Constant	-1.460** (0.622)	3.552*** (1.258)	0.086 (0.704)
Chi2	260.37	103.33	
P	0.00	0.00	
N	1,186	1,186	1,186
R ²			0.16

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. EU versus CU is a five point measure indicating respondents' position on the pro CU-pro EU preference spectrum. EU versus CU district (excluding own) is the district average of the variable EU versus CU, excluding the respondent's own observation to avoid endogeneity. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Pro EU and pro CU are dummies indicating that the respondent would vote in favour of accession to the European Union and Customs Union (with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Table B9

Support for European Union and Customs Union accession and work experience abroad, alternative estimation method.

	EU versus CU	Returnee West (first stage)	EU versus CU	Returnee East (first stage)
Romanian language	1.182*** (0.204)	0.280 (0.188)	1.253*** (0.187)	-0.048 (0.120)
Female	0.122 (0.099)	-0.166 (0.130)	-0.085 (0.124)	-0.792*** (0.113)
Age	-0.050 (0.040)	-0.040 (0.044)	-0.151** (0.063)	-0.437*** (0.055)
Revenue	0.013 (0.023)	0.041 (0.038)	0.019 (0.024)	-0.011 (0.038)
Higher education	0.367*** (0.102)	-0.101 (0.128)	0.296*** (0.096)	-0.145 (0.147)
Rural	0.060 (0.174)	-0.464*** (0.162)	0.009 (0.140)	-0.025 (0.123)
Returnee West	2.184** (0.993)			
Returnee East			-0.891 (0.623)	
cons	0.771*** (0.231)		1.433*** (0.435)	
District diaspora West (2004)		536.387*** (150.603)		86.481 (161.805)
District diaspora East (2004)		-14.512*** (3.815)		9.608*** (2.444)
Constant		-1.397*** (0.422)		0.197 (0.352)
athrho		-0.716 (0.490)		0.162 (0.284)
Insigma		0.351*** (0.046)		0.304*** (0.024)
N	1,186	1,186	1,186	1,186

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Coefficients estimated with STATA's `etregress` command. EU versus CU is a five point measure indicating respondents' position on the pro CU -pro EU preference spectrum. District diaspora West (2004) indicates the percentage of the district population living in the West in 2004. District diaspora East (2004) indicates the percentage of the district population living in the a former Soviet country in 2004 Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Table B10

Domestic policy preferences and work experience abroad.

	Legislation	State	Private sector	FDI	Industry
Returnee East	0.045 (0.154)	0.020 (0.122)	0.247 (0.260)	-0.011 (0.213)	0.122 (0.146)
Returnee West	0.349* (0.186)	-0.228 (0.235)	0.283 (0.241)	0.703** (0.212)	-0.191 (0.194)
Returnee East and West	0.201 (0.280)	-0.616 (0.547)	0.013 (0.555)	-0.264 (0.393)	-0.269 (0.289)
Romanian	0.235 (0.177)	- 0.283** (0.138)	-0.360*** (0.120)	0.566** (0.245)	-0.254* (0.150)
Female	-0.053 (0.123)	-0.003 (0.164)	0.245 (0.257)	- 0.282** (0.119)	-0.095 (0.116)
Age	-0.053 (0.056)	-0.005 (0.061)	0.015 (0.101)	-0.111* (0.060)	-0.024 (0.066)
Higher education	0.182 (0.184)	0.125 (0.128)	0.182 (0.174)	0.233 (0.166)	0.125 (0.261)
Revenue	0.057** (0.026)	-0.007 (0.039)	0.031 (0.036)	-0.004 (0.030)	0.013 (0.023)
Rural	-0.014 (0.247)	- 0.329** (0.165)	-0.485*** (0.178)	- 0.370** (0.180)	-0.386 (0.239)
Constant	-0.976*** (0.314)	-0.470* (0.280)	-1.278* (0.652)	- 0.702** (0.281)	-0.074 (0.244)
<i>N</i>	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Logistic regressions. Dependent variables are dummies indicating that the respondent considers the respective issue as a top 3 policy priority. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Table B10 (continued)

Domestic policy preferences and work experience abroad.

	Small farmers	Property protection	Local administration	State institutions	Crime
Returnee East	0.067 (0.186)	0.262 (0.201)	0.201 (0.278)	-0.249 (0.230)	-0.088 (0.197)
Returnee West	-0.254 (0.304)	0.323 (0.390)	0.384 (0.319)	-0.431 (0.491)	-0.123 (0.258)
Returnee East and West	0.279 (0.429)	0.317 (0.457)	0.048 (0.784)	-0.082 (0.424)	0.502 (0.403)
Romanian	0.372** (0.159)	0.216 (0.178)	-0.157 (0.423)	-0.147 (0.254)	0.236 (0.148)
Female	-0.184 (0.129)	0.199 (0.158)	0.273 (0.218)	-0.006 (0.181)	-0.124 (0.196)
Age	0.053 (0.054)	0.063 (0.088)	0.022 (0.143)	-0.152* (0.092)	-0.017 (0.075)
Higher education	-0.333* (0.192)	-0.229 (0.211)	-0.005 (0.414)	0.430** (0.212)	0.089 (0.143)
Revenue	-0.038 (0.027)	-0.003 (0.023)	0.002 (0.053)	0.029 (0.037)	0.080* (0.042)
Rural	-0.020 (0.183)	0.116 (0.187)	-0.164 (0.277)	0.305 (0.197)	0.246 (0.190)
Constant	-0.769***	-2.073***	-2.532***	-1.724***	- 1.633** *
<i>N</i>	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Logistic regressions. Dependent variables are dummies indicating that the respondent considers the respective issue as a top 3 policy priority. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Table B11

FDI, legislation functioning and work experience abroad (IV second stage)

	FDI	Legislation
Returnee West IV	-1.895 (3.573)	0.694 (2.767)
Returnee East IV	0.139 (1.004)	0.587 (0.983)
Romanian	0.682*** (0.260)	0.241 (0.200)
Female	-0.301 (0.249)	0.044 (0.241)
Age	-0.112 (0.114)	0.001 (0.114)
Higher education	0.193 (0.170)	0.213 (0.181)
Revenue	0.014 (0.045)	0.060 (0.036)
Rural	-0.488** (0.211)	-0.021 (0.254)
Constant	-0.662 (0.747)	-1.319** (0.604)
<i>N</i>	1,192	1,192

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. Logistic regressions. Dependent variables are dummies indicating that the respondent considers the respective issue as a top 3 policy priority. Returnee East IV and returnee West IV are predicted probabilities to have worked in a former Soviet country and in a Western country respectively (first stage regressions in Table C1). Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Appendix C. First stage regressions.

Table C1

Probability to have worked in the East and West as a function of district diaspora to East and West in 2004

	Returnee East	Returnee West
District diaspora West (2004)	229.087 (236.098)	1,143.828*** (327.294)
District diaspora East (2004)	15.275*** (3.997)	-29.592*** (8.540)
Higher education	-0.315 (0.244)	-0.229 (0.303)
Romanian language	-0.106 (0.194)	0.627** (0.285)
Age	-0.779*** (0.090)	-0.097 (0.100)
Revenue	-0.014 (0.060)	0.116** (0.058)
Female	-1.417*** (0.204)	-0.371 (0.274)
rural	-0.030 (0.221)	-0.812*** (0.302)
Constant	0.419 (0.570)	-2.743*** (0.679)
Chi2	302.66	47.79
P	0.00	0.00
N	1,192	1,192

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Logistic regressions. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. District diaspora West (2004) indicates the percentage of the district population living in the West in 2004. District diaspora East (2004) indicates the percentage of the district population living in the East in 2004. Returnee East and returnee West are dummies for work experience in a former Soviet country and a Western country respectively. Romanian language indicates that the respondent chose to conduct the interview in Romanian.

Appendix D: Perceived benefits of joining the European Union and the Customs Union

Table D1

Biggest advantage of joining the European Union and work experience abroad.

	Non migrants	Returnees East	Returnees West	Returnees East and West
Visa liberalisation	155	28	22	5
<i>column %</i>	<i>17,15</i>	<i>12,73</i>	<i>26,51</i>	<i>16,67</i>
Jobs	64	36	7	3
<i>column %</i>	<i>7,08</i>	<i>16,36</i>	<i>8,43</i>	<i>10</i>
Higher living standards	87	18	8	9
<i>column %</i>	<i>9,62</i>	<i>8,18</i>	<i>9,64</i>	<i>30</i>
Economic development	41	10	9	2
<i>column %</i>	<i>4,54</i>	<i>4,55</i>	<i>10,84</i>	<i>6,67</i>
Higher wages and pensions	28	11	5	1
<i>column %</i>	<i>3,1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6,02</i>	<i>3,33</i>
There are no benefits	209	66	12	2
<i>column %</i>	<i>23,12</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>14,46</i>	<i>6,67</i>
I do not know	224	42	8	6
<i>column %</i>	<i>24,78</i>	<i>19,09</i>	<i>9,64</i>	<i>20</i>
Other	79	8	10	2
<i>column %</i>	<i>8,73</i>	<i>3,63</i>	<i>12,01</i>	<i>6,66</i>
Total	904	220	83	30
<i>column %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Note: Distribution of answers to the question: “What is the biggest advantage of joining the European Union?”. Response categories with fewer than 5% of responses for at least one column were grouped together in the category other. They include: cheaper energy, lower prices, better collaboration, financial help, respect for the retired, less corruption, more exports, more investments, development of education and culture, improvement of the judicial system, respect of rights, communication language, infrastructure development, bigger market, tourism development, change in people’s way of thinking and acting, return of migrants, solution for the political crisis, better local infrastructure, I have relatives in the EU, Romanian language will keep its status and security maintenance.

Table D2

Biggest advantage of joining the Customs Union and work experience abroad.

	Non migrants	Returnees East	Returnees West	Returnees East and West
Visa liberalisation	38	13	1	0
<i>Column %</i>	<i>4,2</i>	<i>5,91</i>	<i>1,2</i>	<i>0</i>
Jobs	53	28	4	2
<i>Column %</i>	<i>5,86</i>	<i>12,73</i>	<i>4,82</i>	<i>6,67</i>
Cheaper energy	145	40	12	5
<i>Column %</i>	<i>16,04</i>	<i>18,18</i>	<i>14,46</i>	<i>16,67</i>
Financial aid	47	12	2	1
<i>Column %</i>	<i>5,2</i>	<i>5,45</i>	<i>2,41</i>	<i>3,33</i>
Product exports	32	12	8	2
<i>Column %</i>	<i>3,54</i>	<i>5,45</i>	<i>9,64</i>	<i>6,67</i>
Higher living standards	48	10	1	1
<i>Column %</i>	<i>5,31</i>	<i>4,55</i>	<i>1,2</i>	<i>3,33</i>
Economic development	39	5	6	4
<i>Column %</i>	<i>4,31</i>	<i>2,27</i>	<i>7,23</i>	<i>13,33</i>
Access to markets	42	12	2	1
<i>Column %</i>	<i>4,65</i>	<i>5,45</i>	<i>2,41</i>	<i>3,33</i>
No benefits	138	22	28	8
<i>Column %</i>	<i>15,27</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>33,73</i>	<i>26,67</i>
I do not know	244	36	15	6
<i>Column %</i>	<i>26,99</i>	<i>16,36</i>	<i>18,07</i>	<i>20</i>
Other	78	30	4	0
<i>Column %</i>	<i>8,62</i>	<i>13,61</i>	<i>4,8</i>	<i>0</i>
Total	904	220	83	30
<i>Column %</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>

Note: Distribution of answers to the question: "What is the biggest advantage of joining the Customs Union?". Response categories with fewer than 5% of responses for at least one column were grouped together in the category other. They include: they have everything, lower prices, better collaboration, higher wages and pensions, respect for the retired, reduction of corruption, it is closer, higher investments, resolution of the Transnistrian conflict, improvement of education and culture, improvement of the judicial system, easy language of communication, common past, Moldova would get rid of debts, tourism development, lower customs duties, return of Migrants, many Moldovans have Russian citizenship, introduction of quality standards, better governance, closed borders, I have family there.

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