

# **Citizenship practices and transnationalism in Spanish cities.**

## **The case of the Romanian migrants**

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### **The issue**

The main topic of the article is to explore the patterns of political participation and representation of the Romanian migrant community in several Spanish cities and in their homeland and discuss the theoretical relevance of this evidence for conceptions of political equality and democratic participation. The central empirical inquiry refers to *how* the possession of political rights at the local level and in the country of origin has generated practices of participation and incorporation in the processes of decision making and the electoral politics; the theoretical reflexion is centered on how we *should* conceive new forms of representation and participation that preserve the democratic ideal of political equality and at the same time take into account the challenges of individual mobility, local embeddedness of membership understandings and transnational political ties. In a very particular way, this discussion tries to grasp the paradoxes of democratic ideals and new forms of membership and political identifications.

Contemporary studies on immigration and citizenship signal a series of challenges the mobility of individuals poses to the classical associations between the citizenry, the state and the boundaries they delimitate. There is a rich empirical evidence that the citizenship practices of the migrants are not exclusively oriented towards their context of residence, their country of origin being a important site of political engagement (Glick Schiller et al. 1994; Portes et al. 1999; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a,b; Smith and Bakker 2008). The institutional responses also go beyond the modern association between nationhood, residence and citizenship, as the receiving countries have broadened the access of non-national residents to a series of entitlements formerly reserved to national citizens, while the sending states deploy a plethora of policies which maintain the ties with the extra-territorial citizens (Soysal 1994, Joppke 2003, Bauböck 2001, 2007). The normative theorists draw the attention that these individual and state practices usually fail to pass the test of liberal democratic principles as political equality and fair treatment: the non-national residents are banned political voice and rights, although they are affected by the bounding decisions taken in their communities of residence (Benhabib 2004, Kostakopoulou 2001, 2008), while extra-territorial citizens often have voice and political rights in their home country, although it is questionable if they are still affected by the bounding decisions there (Bauböck 2007a).

These two spaces of citizenship (country of residence and homeland) play with an ambiguous conception of mobility and political agents: most of the migrants who have moved to their destination

are there to stay and their trajectory is to become permanent residents, many times without political rights and eventually naturalized and with full access to political participation and representation. Temporary migrants are not even taken into consideration from a political point of view. They are guests, and guests have never had a say in the political affairs of constituted and stable communities. The category of extra-territorial citizen is more complex: some are expected to return and some have gone forever. The state, however, is interested in having ties with both, with the former in order to maintain the remittances flows and assure human capital upgrading and with those from the latter category, as they may constitute a good lobby in their country of residence (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003b).

A totally separate discussion related to the mobility of persons and new ways for conceiving politics refers to the on-going construction of the EU and its democratic deficit. Although the origins of the European citizenship is “ancillary to the practice of migration” (Day and Shaw 2002), the normative discussions do not concentrate so much on the problematic of political equality among individuals but rather on the legitimacy of the whole construction as such<sup>1</sup>. Brussels technocrats often take decisions that are far away from the reach of the ordinary European; and even in spite of the progressive Europeanization in many policy areas, the national identity is still the core one among the plurality of political loyalties. Searching for a solution to these problems, the discourses on the democratic legitimacy of the European construction are based on a conception of civic citizenship, which is supposed to bypass the national loyalties and patriotic sentiments and engage citizens and institutions in an open project of democratic exercise, centered on political principles as the respect for liberty, equality and the rule of law. The genuine assimilation and use of these abstract political values in the daily practices of citizenship should be complemented with more participation from below, both by fomenting the political incorporation at the local level of non-national EU residents and a broader participation in European elections and decision-making process (Second Commission report on the citizenship of the Union, COM(97)0230).

What this type of reflection lacks is the basic observation all present now in migration studies that the practices of citizenship of the EU nationals may also have a transnational dimension. Moreover, mobility, and not sedentariness is one of the core basic principles of the EU space. The EU citizen is expected to travel and establish his home anywhere on the ground of Fortress Europe, to switch his banal nationalism towards constitutional patriotism and to be more active regarding the EU issues. The EU citizenship discourse leaves in silence any type of attachments with the country of origin and any possible inertia the residence context may oppose to the core basic principle of freedom of movement. However, it does presuppose, that the ideal of political equality is the goal to be pursued by any political association, be it at the state, suprapstate or sub-state level.

In the light of the empirical findings, my argument is that the principle of freedom of movement as such and the intent to construct a bottom up Union citizenship starting from a de-nationalized conception of political participation at the local level fails to fulfill the democratic ideal of political

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<sup>1</sup> As an exception see Bauböck 2007b.

equality, due to the tension between inclusion and temporariness. In other words, the EU citizenship conception is based on an unsolved dilemma between the principle of affectedness and mobility. I also argue that the Union citizenship should take into account the transnational bounds between member state migrants and their country of origin and devise in this case new forms of representation and participation regarding this phenomenon.

The case-study presented in this paper tries to grasp how the Romanian migrants, newly EU citizens, are perceived as political agents in their localities of residence and by the institutions of their country of origin and how they managed to use the multiple political affiliations they have. The citizenship practices of this collective cannot be subscribed under the simple equation of post-national citizenship. In a way, the Romanians are not the Europeans portrayed by various official and academic discourses, which in no time adopt the civic identity and become active citizens. Neither are the middle-size Spanish localities included in this study the perfect spaces where local identities do not matter when it comes to politically include and dialog with the foreigners, many of them temporary there.

But how relevant is sedentariness for the fair and equal treatment of new EU citizens in their places of residence and in their country of origin? And if it is not, then how can we speak of fair political treatment between new citizens who are temporarily passing by and those who perceive that there it is their home, as they engage in a future-oriented commitment with their locality? What are the implications of the transnational political ties for the political communities of residence?

In some cases, the presupposed temporariness and the lively links they have with the country of origin has generated hybrid political practices that may be suggestive for future forms of political representation and participation of mobile populations. It is interesting to see from a normative point of view if multi-functional churches or spaceless political campaigns are the some of the answers we may envisage.

### **A note on methodology**

The approach of the paper is to discuss these problems from a contextual political analysis perspective. In Carens' terms, the contextual inquiry provides an intellectual richness which a purely theoretical approach might lose out of sight, due to the abstractness and generality of its formulations. Moreover, it can be clarifying for important questions of the political theory and, at the same time, give a more concrete and specific meaning to them. "My basic strategy throughout is to move back and forth between theory and context, articulating intuitive judgments about cases in terms of theoretical principles and critically assessing theoretical formulations in light of their implications for particular contexts" (Carens 2000: 2).

For the present study, the context is revealed through the analysis of institutional discourses on citizenship and migration and the field research I did during 2008<sup>2</sup>. The qualitative research was led in

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<sup>2</sup> The qualitative research took place in Castellon between february and march 2008 and in Madrid between december 2008 and february 2009.

four middle-size Spanish towns (between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants), with an important percentage of Romanian migration (more than 15% in each locality). The localities are situated in the Madrid Autonomous Community and the Valencian community, the most important destinations of the Romanian migration in Spain. The regional level has an important role in managing integration policies and many of the autonomous communities already foster local citizenship models. I have chosen the middle-size localities in spite of doing research in Madrid and Valencia as here the electoral and political potential of the Romanian migrants is more visible. The interviews, around 30 in all localities, were addressed to migrant associations, orthodox and neo-protestant priests, Romanian parties' transnational representatives and members, local and regional political party representatives, experts on immigration and integration from at the local and regional level<sup>3</sup>. The interviews and the document analysis intend to bring to light how the Spanish and Romanian political actors perceive and incorporate the Romanian collectives at the local elections in Spain in May 2007, the Romanian presidential referendum in the same month and the Romanian parliamentary elections in November 2008. They also seek to explain how the Romanian communities in these localities have managed to organize and dialog with the multi-level power structures. These qualitative data are complemented by existing statistics on migrant population and their electoral participation, although their acquisition has not always been simple<sup>4</sup>.

### **1. Territoriality and movement. Institutional responses to migration and citizenship**

Connolly considers that democratic theory has always suffered of homesickness (1995: 137). That is, the founding myths of the political communities and the legitimation discourses between the rulers and the ruled have always been based on the recognition of a people (or a nation) dwelling a territory bound together by a set of shared understandings, identities and traditions. This recognition has also supposed "the organization of institutions of electoral accountability and constitutional restraint that enable the territorialized people with shared understandings to rule themselves, while protecting their fundamental interests and freedoms" (ibid). Either atemporal in character or founded by settlers, the political community has normally generated into the formation of fences and walls, the construction or imposition of a thick or thin identity and the presupposition that people bound by it are not there temporary. In other words, that citizens enter into a timeless compromise with the past, present and future generations which enables the reproduction of the community throughout the time. The simplest evidence of the intrinsic relation between membership in a political community and permanence may be observed in the logic of naturalization laws: you are supposed to be a permanent member of the society once you fully recognize the identity of the immigration country as the natural thing for you. Only when an individual becomes permanent he is entitled to the full benefits of

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<sup>3</sup> This paper is the result of a work in progress. The regional level in Valencia is planned in the next round of fieldwork. Also, the qualitative investigation still has to be completed with focus groups with Romanian migrants and more interviews with local politicians and public servants dealing with immigration, as well as with interviews with Romanian party representatives.

<sup>4</sup> In some localities, for example, it was impossible to access the statistical data from the city hall, as they kindly avoided to answer my requests.

citizenship.

Permanence does not imply the impossibility of movement. If people decide to move their domicile from one place to another inside a nation-state, that is not too controversial. They just go and register to the local administration and decide if they want to be active or passive, found a hometown association that would remind them of home, or just watch the football games with the new neighbors. No matter how they chose to express their political allegiance to the new habitat, they enter the same logic of past, present and future compromise with the new political community. People may also move their residence across borders. But here their first status is of tourists, guests illegal migrants or long term residents. Only after they decide they want to stay there permanently (more as a condition of possibility and not as a de facto constraint) and pass the test of wanted new citizens, they may apply for the benefits of full membership in the new context. And this dialectic between permanent members-guests or illegals-new permanent members goes on every time an individual decides to move her domicile across borders.

Neither guests nor tourists are a preoccupation from a political point of view. Concepts like redistribution, solidarity and shared meanings have no importance to them, as they arrived somewhere to stay longer or shorter and then leave. Their stay is limited to aesthetic concerns, while the political and the ethical aspects are reduced to respecting the norms of good behavior of the places they visit. The tourists and guests are not considered political subjects as they fail to pass one of the main tests of democratic citizenship, the principle of affectedness, which states that all those affected by a political decision should have a say in the process of decision making (Hilson 2006). The principle of affectedness presupposes permanence as a requirement and excludes all those who seem to be temporary on a territory.

The above discussion about the intrinsic relationship between permanence and membership points to the core principles of democratic citizenship: the right of the people to rule themselves requires cohesion and a sense of permanent (although adaptive) membership; the principles of affectedness and mobility require inclusion<sup>5</sup>. Due to the increased mobility across borders, contemporary forms of citizenship play distinctively with these concepts. Immigration states have passed to a thin, post-national conception of membership which allowed the transformation of guest-workers in denizens and eventually citizens. Emigration states have redefined the meaning of permanent membership, by decoupling it from territorial residence. The EU citizenship is based upon the principle of freedom of movement and a local conception of citizenship based on residence, while at the same conferring the central role to the national citizenship and its limitations.

The case-study presented in this paper is framed by three institutional opportunity structures: the EU citizenship status which allowed for the freedom of movement of Romanian workers and their political participation in their communities of residence; the Spanish official rhetoric on citizenship which promotes a post-national conception of membership that embraces the new members of the society and at the same time is anchored in ethno-cultural particularities; and the Romanian policies

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<sup>5</sup> See for a similar discussion Rile Hayward 2004

regarding their citizens living abroad which confer them the right to vote and be represented at national level. In the next sections I shall briefly discuss these institutional opportunities and capture the different ways the dialectics between temporariness/permanent status, membership and the right of free movement.

### *1.1 Post-national and national dialectics in Spain*

The Spanish national discourses and policies on citizenship are stretched between the intent to offer a post-national understanding of membership and the historical inertias which still make of origin an important element for the integration. The PECEI plan (National Plan on Integration and Citizenship) deserves special attention, for the substantial resources allocated as well as for the central role it gives to the concept of citizenship. As the title shows, this proposal is the first integration policy that uses the term “citizenship”. This suggests the recognition of the permanent character of immigration in Spain and its implications for how to conceive and re-define citizenship<sup>6</sup>.

The central understanding of citizenship that PECEI proposes is almost identical with the **civic citizenship**, established by the EU Council in 2004<sup>7</sup>. The plan is sought to offer a comprehensive national framework of integration, which all regional governments should have in mind when designing their programmes. The common language refers to the basic principles established at Tampere, so in fact there is no comprehensive national framework, but an adaptation of the thin civic conception the EU sets out. Apart for its isomorphism with the European document, the PECEI has a more stressed republican character. It assesses the importance of the *active* citizenship jointly with its civic character. It promotes a bottom up dynamics, starting with the creation of the *citizenship in the city*, fact which supposes a deeper integration of the immigrant in its closest receiving context and a first step towards the broader integration in the Spanish society which should culminate with the naturalization. Reading between the lines, the PECEI argues for the desirability of the local voting rights, but it does not make any “strong” provision on that. The main problem that derives from that is its internal normative inconsistency, as a genuine active citizenship by part of the immigrant presupposes the liberalization of the political rights from the monopoly of the nationals.

As Joppke showed, since the end of Franco regime, there is a progressive transition from a discourse which promoted “preferential” immigration, to a universal one, a proof towards the liberalization and an apparent de-ethnicization of the Spanish conception on citizenship (Joppke 2005). The so called *Comunidad Hispanica*, formed by the Latin American Countries and Portugal has lost its legal and discursive strength. The preferential treatment supposed an easier procedure to obtain work permits, although its implementation had been object of many legal and judicial decisions, as it seemed to enter in contradiction with other constitutional provisions. Due to the constant pressure of the Europeanization and liberalization of the immigration discourses and policies, the nationals of the *Comunidad Hispanica* have lost privileges in immigration law, but have strengthened the foothold in

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<sup>6</sup> In 2008, there were more than 5 million immigrants residing in Spain. They already make up to 11,30% of the total population. Data taken from the Spanish National Statistics Institute website, [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es)

<sup>7</sup> See Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU, (COM(2005)0389 FINAL)

the nationality law. The integration conception is ethnically blind, but the accession procedures and rules of naturalization are not. For example, the citizens of the Latin American countries may apply for naturalization only after two years. The rest of the immigrants must wait up to ten years. Moreover, the Spanish law forbids dual citizenship, except in the case of Spanish ethnics abroad and Latin American immigrants. Looking at the naturalization rates<sup>8</sup>, it is quite obvious that origin still matters, not that much as an integration pre-requisite, but as an accession into the national political community. Moreover, the Madrid Government has signed various bilateral agreements with a series of Latin American countries in order to grant local voting rights starting with 2011 on basis of reciprocity. So far no agreement has been signed with Morocco, which has the second largest emigrant group in Spain.

### *1.2 Extra-territorial membership in Romania*

As the Spanish polity tries to respond to the challenge of immigration by proposing a post-national conception of citizenship, the Romanian state strengthens the legal status of Romanians abroad, by reviving and ethno-cultural understanding of the nation. The ties between the homeland and the external citizens are maintained through a series of policies and measures in the realm of cultural and political membership. Thus, we witness an increasing interest in maintaining and developing the *cultural identity* of the Romanian communities abroad, starting with financing language and culture courses till supporting the construction of Orthodox churches. The creation of this extra-territorial cultural membership has a certain participatory character, as the objectives are established by previous consultations with the emigrant communities and the kin minorities' representatives, and take into account their claims of identity needs. On the other hand, the *political membership* of the external citizens is rather a side effect of a series of domestic political changes, and not the consequence of a bottom-up transnational mobilization and negotiation, or of a state strategy to secure the remittances flows. Thus, the external voting rights have been re-established after the 1991 citizenship law which was meant to restore the ties with the kin minorities and also with the anti-communist Diaspora (Iordachi 2003; Bauböck 2007). The parliamentary representation is a spill over of the shift in the domestic norms of representation, and has been made with no previous consultation of the co-ethnic communities from abroad. The *economic role* of emigrants is not captured by any law or policy, but rather by overlapped public discourses, starting with media imaginary till party rhetoric on the importance of the remittances for the domestic growth and the sacrifices the emigrants make for their society of origin.

The Law for the Romanians living abroad (299/2007) is the first one that associates the status of "Romanians abroad" with "rights":

"The present law regulates the rights of ethnic Romanians as well as of those that belong to the Romanian cultural tradition living outside Romanian borders, named hereafter Romanians living abroad, having as

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<sup>8</sup> There is a slightly increased percentage of Latin American migrants that naturalize in comparison with other collectives, although their length of stay is shorter than of the Moroccans. See *Anuario estadístico de inmigración 2005-2007*

purpose the maintainment, promotion and affirmation of their cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity” (art 1a)

Regarding the political representation, the formation of a special constituency for the external citizens is explained by the promoters of the law as a “functional requirement of the uninominal system”, as the Bucharest circumscription cannot receive anymore the votes from abroad, due to the fact that between the electoral colleges and the representatives elected will be a direct relation, so it would be unfair for the citizens of the capital to have influenced their election. The forty-third constituency, that of the external citizens, is be represented by four deputies and two senators starting with November 2008.

Starting with January 2007, the Romanian and the Spanish polities are bound not only by the migratory phenomenon, but also by the EU membership. In spite of being part of the common area of freedom, security and justice, the public perception of the Romanians did not change just as fast as their formal status. The public discourses and the official statistics in Spain still speak of Romanians along with Moroccans and Ecuadorians, rather than with Germans and Frenchmen. In spite of that, EU membership meant a fundamental change in the rights and opportunities of the Romanian migrants: the right to vote in local and European elections and the right to work without any restrictions<sup>9</sup>. How does the EU conceive this relation between the freedom of movement and flexible territoriality and the political membership?

### *1.3 The EU citizenship and the democratic deficit*

The principle of the freedom of movement of workers between the member states has been established since the onset of the European Community. Ever since the beginning of the codifications of the EU citizenship, nationality played an important role, although the rhetoric has always pointed to universal principles and cosmopolitan ethics. The dialectics between the opening space between European countries and the central role of nationality is most obvious if we take into account that third country nationals do not enjoy the same liberties as the EU nationals. The progressive inner opening of the EU meant the establishment of clear borders between insiders and outsiders, an inherent process in the formation of modern nation state citizenship as well. The definition of who is and insider and who is an outsider remains the total responsibility of the MS, as naturalization and immigration policies are some of the areas where little progress has been done in terms of Europeanization.

It is obvious though, that any identity building process presupposes the establishment of the difference (Connolly 1991). The puzzle that the EU still faces in the eyes of many publics is that this identity is ambivalent or even inexistent. On the one hand, frontiers do not matter for those who wish to live and work in another place. On the other hand, they do if we go a bit further from this economic

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<sup>9</sup> The right to work without restrictions is rather in principle than de facto. Spain lift up the barriers of the right to work of Romanian and Bulgarian migrants on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2009. Other countries, as UK and Germany still maintain the restrictions for a transitory period ranging from 1 to 8 years. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007 until the same day of 2009 the Romanians and the Bulgarians had a special status among the migrants needing work-permits in Spain, less demanding than for the third country nationals but not free as for intra-EU migrants.



understanding of the EU citizenship and think of its political aspect. Some consider EU to be a weak political community due to the fact that it does not have the set of shared understandings, traditions and emotional elements that binds people together in a (modern) political community. Others believe that if these shared understandings do not exist, they should be invented. Habermas for example argues that the attachment to abstract political norms may compensate for the lack of thick norms and traditions and may have the same binding effect (1998).

Along with the post-national type of membership as a shared understanding, the political rights are the other necessary ingredient to make out of a territory where self-interested people move, a bounded polity. The Commission has justified the granting of voting rights at local elections for all EU nationals residing on the territory of another member state and at European Elections on the basis of the affectedness principle (Hilson 2006: 63). In a document from 1998, the Commission states that “residence is the most appropriate criterion for determining the place of voting than nationality. Actually living in a municipality means that our aspects of daily life are influenced by the decisions taken by the elected body that runs the municipality” (Commission 1998 quoted by Hilson 2006: 58). However, it is not obvious why the elected body at national level’s decisions would not affect the daily lives of the non-national residents. Paradoxically, the Commission has argued against the desirability of voting rights at national level for non-national residents, as this has to do with the sovereign integrity of the states, a delicate issue where the Commission knows it cannot go too far.

Apart from these obvious inner contradictions, but maybe understandable from the cold logic of the primacy of national sovereignty, what we may conclude for our analysis is that the EU citizenship presupposes three things: the decoupling of labour and (national) territoriality (self interested individuals have the freedom to work anywhere they find suitable on the territory of the EU); the quest for a more democratic Union which supposes a bottom-up political compromise of these individuals, and this is thought to start in the places of residence; the faith that the civic principles may have the same gluing effect on the nationally diverse local communities as sentiments of patriotism, irrational identifications with the past and the future generations, have for those who possess the same passport, speak the same language and praise the same national heroes that fought for independence and which are learnt in schools or heard about involuntarily ever since childhood.

The next section is dedicated to this endeavour: understand how these things happened and if they happened in the case of the Romanian migrants in the small municipalities they chose to work and reside. The section tries to answer three questions: How did the local political actors incorporate the new EU members of their communities and how do they perceive them? How did the Romanians organize in order to make use of their political entitlements? How do they politically relate to their country of origin and which are the consequences of these transnational ties for the local understandings and practices of citizenship?

## **2. Local and transnational dynamics of citizenship practices**

The localities selected for the present study are rather anonymous on the Spanish map. They are small to middle size towns: in the Madrid community we have Arganda del Rey with almost 50,000 inhabitants, Coslada with 86,000 and Alcala de Henares with 200,000; in the Valencian Community we have Castellon with 173,000 inhabitants. The first reason for choosing these localities has been the numeric criteria. They display the biggest density of Romanians in Spain, fact which reinforces their electoral potential<sup>10</sup>. The second criterion of the selection has been the colour of the ruling party at the city hall, although the biggest Romanian communities concentrate where the conservative party has the majority (both Valencian and Madrid regional governments are ruled by the Popular Party). Thus, Coslada is one of the few towns with a socialist government and an important concentration of Romanians. Arganda del Rey is an important site of research as here we dispose of more quantitative data on the population<sup>11</sup>, fact which helps us contrast the perceptions and narratives of the main stakeholders with a wider research at the individual level. Alcala and Castellon are two middle-size, but important cities in their communities. Their inclusion in the same group, apart from the numeric criteria, was determined by the existence of local far right movements which used the migratory phenomenon as an electoral tool. It is important to see if and how these far right movements influenced the political incorporation of the Romanians, in spite of the welcoming and open official discourses.

### **2.1 Local management of diversity**

The regional integration offices have a strong presence in all localities selected and are the main institutions that deal with the immigrant communities in the area. The autonomous communities display an important difference in this respect, as in Valencia the AMICS office is addressed to all immigrants independently of their origin, while in Madrid there are specific centres for the most numerous communities (CEPIs), as for example the Hispano-Ecuadorian centre, the Hispano-Romanian centre and so on. The Hispano-Romanian centres are in Alcala and Coslada and no other migrant collective has its own centres in these localities. Although the declared objective of the centres is to welcome Spaniards and migrants independently of their passport, they are perceived as an enclave by the other migrant groups and criticised for offering preferential treatment to the Romanians. This fact determined a certain tacit conflict between the migrant groups, more specifically among the Poles who perceive that they are left aside and given nothing in comparison to the Romanians. In my conversations with the Romanians and their association leaders, they also perceived that they are given nothing and that more attention should be paid by part of the regional and local

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<sup>10</sup> The city with the biggest absolute number of Romanians is Madrid, but reported to the overall population, this collective becomes almost invisible.

<sup>11</sup> The 2725 study of the National Center for Sociological Research, realized between 1-12 June 2007. These quantitative findings regarding the social and political participation of the Romanians in Arganda are most likely to repeat in the other localities as well, but unfortunately this comparative research has not been done yet. The study is available at:  
[http://www.cis.es/cis/opencm/ES/1\\_encuestas/estudios/listaEstudiosYear.jsp?year=2007](http://www.cis.es/cis/opencm/ES/1_encuestas/estudios/listaEstudiosYear.jsp?year=2007)

authorities.

In spite of the fact that many local and regional administrations praise the desirability of democratic governance and that the central vision is to make up citizenship in the city, only Castellon has a municipal plan of integration. The interlocutors from the rest of the localities selected declare that they are on the way to proposing one, although immigration is not such a recent fact. In Alcala for example, the Polish community is one of the oldest in Spain and began to grow at the beginning of the nineties. With or without an official policy, the local public discourses recognize one fact: that immigration and diversity are a stable reality of the daily life of the cities, so toleration and curiosity about the new cultures should be the attitude for coexisting with them.

In Castellon, the integration policies have passed through a substantial transformation regarding the relation Host-Stranger (Alexander 2004) in 2006, when the first municipal plan on immigration and social cohesion has been set. The main reason is the recognition of the *permanent* and *broad* character of migration in Castellon.

“In our city, the foreign born population has passed from 6% in 2001 to 18% in 2006 [...]. Castellon has to be a municipality able to offer its residents a space of opportunities, fair social and economic integration and a participatory context that allows them to realize their plans and expectations in a common social ground; for this we need to know how to articulate the interaction between the late comers and the rest of the society” (I Pla Municipal d’immigració i convivència social (2006-2009), Castello)

The common social ground has still to be reached in terms of participatory mechanisms. For example, no migrant association takes part of the citizens' forum, composed basically by neighbourhood, women and consumer associations. The consultative sessions with the migrant community takes place separately in the Municipal Observatory for Immigration and is composed by public servants and integration experts in a wider proportion than immigrants' representatives. In Alcala the Observatory for Immigration ceased its activity in 2007 when a Romanian was made its president. Since then the consultations with the migrant communities follow an ad-hoc path. The other Madrid localities follow the same logic of irregular and informal dialogue with the immigrants. In spite of that, the local press displays many pictures and articles during the past years where the municipal and regional politicians and the Romanian representatives appear together in different public rituals. These joint photos seem to support the official declarations: that immigration and diversity is a broad and permanent phenomenon. But who are these representatives and whom do they actually represent?

## **2.2 The Romanian community and its forms of organization**

### *Laic and religious forms of organization*

In each city there are two or more visible Romanians that all academics and journalists look for when they want to have a statement by part of the community. In Alcala there is a president of association whom the press called “G.G, the president of Romanians in Spain” until the periodic visits in the “Diaspora” of the Romanian president in exercise. In Coslada, there is a former member of the Adventist church who managed to be the linking person between the president of the Madrid regional government and the Romanian presidency and who has recently formed a Federation of Romanian

Associations (FADERE). In Castellon, there are several associations, but two are the local leaders: the president of the Association of Eastern Countries (AIPE) and the former president of the Association of Romanians in Castellon (ARC), also a member of the Adventist church. In Arganda, we have a young but active association whose leaders prefer to concentrate rather on small local projects than on press statements. There is another federation who gathers associations from diverse Spanish regions and which is based in Madrid and has a strong cooperation with the Coslada city hall and with the Spanish government-FEDROM. All these leaders have explicit or tacit political preferences of political parties from both Spain and Romania. Thus, the associations that are closer to the Popular Party are also friends with the Liberal Democratic Party or the Liberal Party from Romania. Those that have more affiliations with the Spanish Socialists also dialogue with the Romanian Social Democrats. Most of the associations have around 300 members who “come when it is needed”.

In spite of the public appearances of the presidents of associations and the Spanish and Romanian political actors, the latter perceive that the former have a great deal of representative deficit. “The Romanians do not trust their association leaders. They are suspicious. If you want to find the Romanians together come to CEPI or go to the church” (CEPI president in Alcala, Madrid, January 2009).

As most of the informants confirmed, the local churches are the spaces where many Romanians come together. In most of the cities this fact has been taken into consideration by the political actors from both countries. This is even more interesting if we take into consideration that even if Romania is one of the most religious countries in Europe, the church and the political life are quite separated (Voicu 2007).

“C.F: In Romania the politicians have other channels to reach the society, there is no need to come to the church. But here, all the parties, from both Spain and Romania came to talk to me before the elections.

Q: And what did you do?

C.F: Well...I informed the parishioners about the electoral offers of all parties. They are free to chose. I just disseminated the messages. However, the Adventists and Pentecostals are different. They all do what their pastor says” (Orthodox priest, Arganda del Rey, January 2009).

The field research revealed that the church has multiple roles in the process of Romanian migration in Spain: first, it is one of the few spaces where the Romanians gather and dialogue; second, the construction of churches is one of the most important requests on the associations' lists; third, the priests, both Orthodox and Neo-protestants (Adventists and Pentecostals), are very important dialogue partners of the Spanish local authorities, as they are considered by many “the voice of the people”; fourth, most Romanian politicians that came to campaign in Spain made a pilgrimage at the Sunday service in order to talk to the believers.

The Adventist church is also considered the seed of the Romanian migration in Spain as most of the pioneers that migrated at the end of the nineties were part of this cult (Pajares 2005). Moreover, the Adventists have strong ties inside their community, fact which explains why the Romanian migration is by excellence a “network migration” (Aparicio and Tornos 2005) that increased seven times in the past eight years. Coslada and Castellon are the first settlements of these believers.

Nevertheless, the broadening of the Romanian collective has also meant its religious diversification and in the last years the Orthodox became the dominant group among the Romanians in each locality. It is important to note that in Romania the Adventists are less than 1% of the religious groups. In Spain they make up to 30-40% of the migrants from Coslada and around 10% in Castellon. The Adventists and Pentecostals are perceived by the Spanish politicians as being a closed group with strict gender hierarchies. However, in Arganda the pastor has been for many years the only connection between the city hall and the community, although “it was difficult to talk too many issues with them...they were only interested in having a place to pray. Are you all like that in Romania?”(representative of PP Arganda, February 2009)

In Castellon and Alcala the local and regional administrations have agreed to the construction of an Orthodox church in each town. In Castellon, the official version is that the money comes from donations and important business men. However, the associations declare that the conservatives have agreed to cede a land from the public domain for this construction, but they prefer not to make too much publicity to the issue...for fear of local population's reaction. In Alcala, the construction of the Orthodox church was one of the most commented issues in the local press at the beginning of 2007, few months before the elections. The opposition and the other migrant groups have criticized more or less open city hall's decision to “support the construction of a cult place for a foreign population”, while the migrant leaders from the area have all stressed out their role in lobbying the authorities in this issue. Needless to say that the Orthodox priest has been thanking the mayor at most religious services. In spite of the criticism by some part of the local public opinion, the mayor declared that he likes to take care of his migrant collective. However, his statements are ambiguous.

“We have temporary ceded, for 20 years, a land to the Orthodox parish of Alcala de Henares so that they may build with their money a temple..*which once they will cease to use it...as I believe that the Romanian migrants, as the Poles, will return, the building will be our town's property*” (B. Gonzalez, mayor of Alcala de Henares, interview for La Sexta Channel, 14.05.07. Italics mine)

The church is designed to be a multi-functional space so that it may have other uses after the Romanian migration will have gone in the next years. Are multi-functional churches the new hybrid forms for accommodating the temporary diversity? And why should the guests be entitled to these kind of programmes by their residence communities? As we shall see further, not only the mayor of Alcala perceives the Romanians as temporary guests. Most of the political actors think this.

Before entering into more detail about how the Romanians are perceived by the politicians and how they chose to incorporate them, it is important to state that Romanians are many times perceived as a black box. Some consider them a sort of Christians that behave like Muslims, due to the fact that they are so religious and so closed into their spiritual groups. Others believe that they are not interested in politics at all, due to the communist experience and the corruption of the political life in Romania. Most consider that they are temporary, although they speak as if they already are members of the local communities. Few things are known about the migrants, except for some statistics. Although these studies do not unveil what the Romanians themselves think, they are useful in order to make a broader idea. Moreover, some informants considered that these numbers influenced parties' strategies of electoral incorporation of the Romanian community.

### *Statistical uniformities*

In a recent investigation realized in the Madrid AC (Sandu et al. 2009), 32% of the Romanians declare that they will return for sure in a short period of time, while 29% state that they will certainly remain in Spain. The rest of the percentage is divided between those that are undecided or have more ambiguous plans about the return. In 2007 only 10% of the Romanians declared that they had the certainty of going back to their country. The most obvious explanation for the shift in the return intention is given by the fact that many have lost their jobs due to the economic recession. As the pentecostal pastor said, “In autumn we were told to go back to Romania as here the situation is very difficult. In December they told us that we should wait more, as the crisis hit even worse Romania” (Pentecostal pastor, Arganda del Rey, February 2009). It was impossible for me to understand who was the active subject that recommended the return or the stay, but I suppose that the perceptions of the Spanish politician that the Pentecostals and the Adventists have strong bounding ties across borders are true. As it may be noticed, the return decision is quite contextual and depends on various factors. Moreover, although many migrants consider that they will return, not all of them translate the plan into practice. What is important to note is that both migrants and political actors perceive the temporary character of the Romanian migration, fact which influences upon the political dynamics between this collective and its forms of incorporation. However, we should not forget that almost a third of the Romanians believe that their life project will develop in Spain. Although it is impossible to make the division in practice, there is an important difference between those who consider themselves guests and those who think they are settled members of their residence communities

Most of the Spanish politicians and association leaders perceive the Romanians as being passive and not interested in politics, and the numbers speak for themselves. The Romanian migrants had the opportunity to express their political preferences three times since 2007. The tables below present data about the turnout at Romanian presidential referendum, parliamentary elections and the number that registered for the local elections in Spain, as the number of Romanians who actually voted is not available (2.1). Table 2.2 shows these figures in the localities where the fieldwork was led<sup>12</sup>.

Table 2.1. Electoral participation of the Romanian community in Spain

Election/Numbers	
Romanian Presidential Referendum, 19.05.07	14128
Spanish local elections, 27.05.07	58611
Romanian parliamentary elections, 30.11.08	6200

Table 2.2. Political participation of the Romanian migrants at the municipal level

	Alcalá de Henares	Castellón	Coslada	Arganda del Rey
Romanians registered at the	1347	2131	594	1800

<sup>12</sup> As stated earlier, it was quite difficult to access official data. These tables present numbers that appeared in the press and were confirmed by some of the local administrations. The figures regarding the participation at the Romanian elections are taken from Romanian Embassy's press releases.

electoral census for EU citizens				
Presidential referendum	2320	3040	No poll section	No poll section
Demonstration in favor of the Romanian president, 05.05.07	2000 (Madrid city, covering all metropolitan area)	11000	No demonstration	No demonstration
Parliamentary Elections 2008	651	1040	No poll	No poll section
Total population of the municipality <sup>13</sup>	198723	172624	86478	47373
Aprox. number of Romanians	15.000	19.000	12.000	8.500
Ruling party	PP	PP	PSOE	PP

In Arganda, 36% of the Romanians state that they did not want to vote, while 13% did not know they could vote. Of those who were inscribed in the municipal census, almost 60% actually voted (CIS study 2725/2007). Many of those who did not want to go to vote also declare that they do not understand the Spanish politics. In spite of the appearances, there is a similar proportion of between the Romanians and the Spanish residents of Arganda who believe that politics play an important role in citizens' life (70%-74%). Notwithstanding, there is a difference in what concerns the interest in politics: 50% of the Romanians from Arganda say that they are interested, while 65% of their Spanish neighbours answer positively to the question. Although there is no data available for the rest of the localities, we may assume that there is a certain uniformity among towns. However, Coslada impressed the politicians from Madrid for its low electoral participation. Many explain it by the fact that the Adventists were not too interested in politics and that it was difficult to have “direct” access to the migrants. The global perception is that the Romanians lack civic spirit.

“They almost behave as second order citizens...they do not come to complain at the city hall if there is a hole on their street or no light bulb in front of their house. I asked them: why don't you come to tell me things that happen in your neighbourhood, things that you need..a bank, more trees in the park..An they said to me that they do not want to cause problems. So for the Romanians and all the migrants in the city the civic involvement is to cause problems to the administration” (Interview with a city hall counsellor, Arganda del Rey, december 2008)

What these numbers show, as well as several press releases, is the active involvement of the Romanians against the destitution of their president. Many of them felt that the parliament committed an injustice when it voted the motion against him. Eleven thousand Romanians manifesting for Basescu in Castellon meant that more than half of the collective there mobilized and got out in the street. In the referendum day, the ambassador recognizes that there were many left outside and that the numbers that voted reflect the maximum capacity of the voting posts available. Basescu's ritual to approach the emigrants in Spain resembled many times to an Orthodox priest attitude: emphatic with the odyssey of migration, but paternalistic and powerful at the same time. “I understand how it feels to be away from your country. I worked in the marine for twenty years and I was always away. But I promise you I will do everything to fight against corruption and make Romania better for you when you come back”.

The relevance of these statistics, beyond the knowledge interest, is that they have a great

<sup>13</sup> These numbers refer to the municipal census at 01.01.2007, Spanish Institute of Statistics.

influence upon the decisions of the political actors: the association presidents complain that these (low) numbers determined the political parties not to think too much at the inclusion of the Romanians as they are not active political subjects anyway. They have no voice, actually...The next section makes a short presentation of the perceptions the Spanish politicians had on their new EU fellow citizens and how these perceptions were translated into the practice of citizenship.

### **2.3. Perceptions and opinions about the Romanians. Dynamics of electoral politics**

In all the localities selected the presidents of associations lobbied intensively in order to determine the parties to include Romanians on their lists. In spite of that, only in one town from the Madrid community, Getafe, the PP proposed a famous Romanian football player residing there to be number two on their lists. This Romanian candidate was supposed to coordinate the Youth and Sports departments of the city hall, in case PP won. This was not the case and the Romanian candidate gave up his seat as a counsellor of the opposition. In Alcala and Castellon there were also intents to make a Romanian party, which scared a lot the local public opinion, but which did not get too many votes from its compatriots. The president of a Romanian association from Madrid, an old member of the PP, explained that they presented a list with twenty “decent” Romanians to candidate in different towns around Madrid, but the PP chose only the football player and they insisted that his campaign should concentrate around sports and not immigration.

Although gender is considered a legitimate criteria for undertaking special measures regarding the political incorporation of women (the Spanish law requires gender parity on the electoral lists), most of the politicians I spoke to argue that ethnicity and origin are not sufficient for affirmative action. In this sense, the migrants are to be found on the list if they “deserve”, i.e. if they have the special skills required in order to enter into the political competition. As the socialist candidate for the city hall of Alcala declared in a TV interview, “we could not find any Romanian that would fulfil the criteria in order to be included on the lists”. It is difficult to believe, though, that no such candidate could be found among 16.000.

An analysis of the two main parties' campaign discourses reveals that they avoided the issue of immigration. However, in Alacala, for example, the conservatives proposed a Romanian as the director of the immigration department, while the socialists included an Argentinean and a Pole on their counsellor lists. A part of the informants explained the lack of Romanians from the lists by a fear for a possible backlash of the local population. Both in Alcala and Castellon there are a series of far right parties which intensively used anti-immigration slogans in their campaign. Alcala Habitable is already the fourth political force, while in Castellon, Espana 2000 grew in popularity five times since the 2003 elections and won a councillor seat in Onda, the neighbouring town.

“they were afraid of losing a certain percentage of the Spanish votes. The far right may mean 20% of the votes of the Populares. If they had shown too much interest in the Romanian immigrants, it is possible that they had lost those votes from the Spaniards. I wasn't sure I could bring them this 20% with the Romanian votes. They were afraid, anyway. They hadn't done studies before on the Romanian electorate, so they didn't know what their orientation would be. So they decided not to campaign among the Romanians, neither to show them the good things they did for us – for example they facilitated us a land to build a new Orthodox church” (ARC, Castellon, March 2008)

A qualitative study related to the *perceptions and opinions of local politicians, migrant leaders*



and public servants working in the field of migration, shows that 46% of them consider that the immigrants are “very little integrated” (V.A. 2006). This fact seems to confirm the above considerations, according to which, many local elites perceive immigrants as *strangers*, not integrated or passing by, that still have to pass many proofs in order to be considered *locals*. However, the same way of thinking does not seem to apply to mobile castellonese population, whose birth in the city does not assure their permanence there forever.

More curious is the discrepancy between what elites perceive and think and what migrants perceive. The same study showed that while 31% of the informants (political elites, leaders of associations and public servants) think that the autochthons feel **rejection** and **hostility** in front of the migrants, 86% of the immigrants interviewed declared that they felt insignificant or no rejection at all. Moreover, more than 50% of the Romanians living in the Madrid region feel “connected and related” to his locality of residence (Sandu et al. 2009). Where is the truth about the public opinion? It seems, in any case, that the catastrophic perception of immigration is certainly a common place among local elites projecting a politics of fear and prudence in what regards the incorporation of the new members in the power structures. If we take into account the 2731/2007 CIS study on Spanish population, we observe that the Romanians are the highest ranked group among the immigrant collectives that is perceived as not integrated into the Spanish society. The second least integrated group are the Moroccans, while the Latin American immigrants are considered quite integrated and mixed up with the mainstream society.

In consequence, the party strategies regarding the Romanian communities have been defined by an overlapping of various factors: that the Romanian migration is a temporary phenomenon, so it does not need long term consideration; that the native population may not agree to have Romanian politicians among the local elite; and that the Romanians are a-political subjects and do not represent an electoral force in spite of their significant presence at the level of the society. As the representative of the Madrid Socialist Party stated, “I think that we should work more in order to develop the civic spirit among migrants. To make them more participative. We want them to join more associations, not only the church, as we think that participation makes a society healthy. However, my presupposition is that many will return sooner or later” (Madrid, January 2009).

Temporariness, thick membership and low democratic skills at the individual level seem to be the counter-balancing forces to the abstract and thin political ideals that bind the European citizenship construction. Moreover, variables as party ideology seem to play a small role in the practical strategies to incorporate the migrant population.

As shown in various occasions, the political participation and representation in the localities of residence does not give an adequate account of the citizenship practices of the Romanian migrants. The political ties with the country of origin go beyond mass mobilization for the Romanian president. The next section will give some insights about how the politics of the country of origin takes place in the receiving context and how the Spanish institutions respond to these transnational political practices.

## **2.4 Transnational politics and new forms of representation**

As the statistical studies show, the Romanians feel quite attached to their president. Beyond this paternalistic relation, the Bucharest government did few things to boost the political participation of its emigrant communities. It is true that the associations have intense relationships with the homeland officials, but many times a genuine support is lacking. The representatives of the Diaspora in the homeland parliament are perceived as distant and rather symbolic, and none of them is actually an emigrant.

The rationale for choosing the proportion between the represented/representatives has been different than the one regarding the resident nationals. More than two million emigrants are represented by one deputy and one senator as “there are few citizens living abroad who actually participated in elections before”<sup>14</sup>. The predictions of the law were accurate, at least in the case of the 2008 parliamentary elections, where only 6000 Romanians cast their vote from abroad, in spite of the official efforts to establish voting posts in as many localities as possible. However, establishing quotas for political representation of external citizens based exclusively on past statistics is quite questionable from a normative point of view. Why not establish the seats in the parliament also related to the number of resident citizens who actually vote in previous elections, but take into account instead to the whole population? What is it inherent in the mere physical presence on one territory that makes an individual more entitled to political representation than his co-national living (temporary) abroad?

With such a numerous target and few political seats, the parties competed quite hard in the months previous to the elections. The curiosity about the extraterritorial campaign is the fact that it involved not only the Romanians, but also the Spanish political actors. The campaign discourses oscillated between promises for the Romanians who want to return and for those who intend to stay. The “battlefield” was double in this sense, as no candidate had known the permanent residence of the future voters. In this case, Romania, as well as the localities in Spain inhabited by the Romanian communities, were the target of the electoral plans. Some candidates have publicly used the name of Spanish parties and administrations in order to back up their promises. In this sense, the candidate for the social democrats has declared that he and his party want to make Romania a better place for those who intend to return and, at the same time, has used their connections with PSOE in order to show that they have the possibilities to better the life of the Romanians who intend to remain in Spain. The Spanish socialists have made an agreement with their counterparts in Romania in order to offer support to each other at local, national and European elections that take place in Spain. A preliminary form of the agreement was dealt in Brussels, while its final shape was signed in Spain and was sustained ever since by various visits and exchanges between Spanish and Romanian politicians and the presidents of associations that are closer to a centre left ideology. In many localities the small transnational headquarters of the social democrats may be found in PP local offices. It is important to state that the EU partnership between the left oriented parties does not imply by itself agreements in places connected by the migratory phenomenon. Although the Poles are the oldest migrant community

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<sup>14</sup> Cristian Parvulescu, one of the main authors of the latest Electoral Law, in *Adevarul* newspaper, 26.05.08

in Alcala, there is no connection between the Polish left and the local leaders of the Socialist party.

The Romanian democrats had even an easier path to get to the electorate, as the president is a former member of this party. Although there is no national agreement between the PP and the PDL, in most of the localities there are local arrangements. Both in Castellon and Alcala, PDL Spain may be found at conservatives' local offices. The president of the Madrid Community, Esperanza Aguirre, a conservative herself, has been accused in the local press of paying public money for the campaign of a "foreign party". Thus, few months before the parliamentary elections, the Government of Madrid financed the congress of the Romanians in Spain, where the president came. He made sure to remember that the elections would be in a short time, while the crowd reacted as to an electoral meeting. Esperanza Aguirre also waved the flag of the Romanian democrats and declared that she sustains the president and his former party in order to govern Romania. The Socialists publicly condemned this meeting as being inappropriate. Why would the Madrid government pay so that the Romanian president come and make indirect campaign for the elections in his country? And why would the president of the Madrid AC take part and sustain his electoral capital? Was it just a flow of the measures taken by the Madrid AC in order to support the immigrant culture and needs, or was it unavoidable due to the increasing ties that take place not only in Brussels, but in also at the local level? Most importantly, do these transnational ties between parties have de facto consequences?

It is impossible to evaluate now the weight of the words spelled in the campaign. Beyond the electoral rhetoric, is obvious that the Romanian parties cannot determine too much the politics in Spain. However, they may have the capabilities to lobby. The parliamentary representatives of the Romanians have more channels to dialogue with the Spanish administrations apart from the classical diplomatic rules, as the embassy and the consulates are not anymore the exclusive physical representation of Romania in Spain; the conservatives and the socialists already made room for their ideological peers. Actually, the candidate that won the deputy seat had for some years a transnational office in Castellon form where he tried to obtain a series of benefits for the Romanian collective. Some he actually did, as for example the equivalence of the driving licence of Romanian drivers without any extra requirements. In spite of the absence of official declarations, the associations recognize that the future church in Castellon received the support of local authorities mainly because of the constant lobby of Romanian party representatives, association leaders supporting them and the ideological affinity of the ruling party at the local level and the Romanian PDL.

In consequence, the overlapped citizenship practices at local and transnational level and the bridges built at the supranational level also generate complex rhetorical and institutional openings. The case study has showed that hybrid cultural and political forms, as the multi-functional church and the multi-space political rhetoric emerge as a consequence of mobility and transnational ties. In order to have a church, the Romanians are not required to naturalize to show their stable compromise with the host political community. The church is built with the perspective that they would go sooner or later. What is more interesting is that transnational ties and supranational bridges also imply a redistribution of the resources of the host community in order to sustain the politics of the country of

origin. This goes beyond mere multicultural measures through which a congress of the Romanians is supported by the regional government of Madrid. It also implies that the Romanians hear and dialogue with their future representatives in the homeland parliament. At the same time, what the case study showed is that the same indeterminacy of future residence and membership generates practices of exclusion. The party lists are many times closed to guest and passive citizens. Local representation has still a lot to do with a sort of “banal nationalism” (Brubaker 1994) that may cause native backlash and boost far right party success.

### **3. Reflections on political equality**

The analysis of our case-study has revealed that the local institutional settings deal with immigration as if it were a permanent feature of their societies. At the same time, they step back from genuine action regarding the integration of migrants due to the fact that they are perceived as temporary and strangers. This silent contradiction of the discursive and institutional practices reflect the dynamics of political communities still anchored in a territorialized, atemporal understanding of their identity and their exposure to constant mobility and difference.

Reflecting upon the empirical analysis, we may say that the Romanian migrants do not have an equal standing in the process of decision making of their residence communities. This inequality of access is difficult to grasp, but important factors depend on the individual and institutional level. Thus, the Romanian migrants have a rather pre-political culture, concentrated around the Sunday service, while the Orthodox or neo-protestant priest is one of the few figures that binds a dialogue between the political elite and the community. Moreover, the Romanians do not bother to participate in elections and other types of political activities. Using Arendt's terms, many of them did not understand and assimilate the importance of public gathering and public appearance which is the essential feature of the political life of the demos.

The political parties and the administrations also have their discourses regarding the inequality of access of the Romanians: they do not have political skills; they are not fully entitled to all citizen benefits as they are temporary; they may create a backlash of the local public opinion. Another type of injustice, perceived this time by a part of the local residents, is the support the Spanish parties offer to their Romanian ideological peers. “Why use our resources to finance a political campaign of a *foreign* candidate?”

Dahl (2006) considers that goal of political equality which any democracy should pursue is that “each person is of equal intrinsic worth and no person is intrinsically superior to one another; the good of each person must be given equal consideration”. The conditions in order to achieve this goal are: effective participation, equality in voting, gaining enlightened understanding, final control of agenda, inclusion. Young (2000) argues that when this model of ideal democracy is not fulfilled in practice, the disadvantaged groups are entitled to differentiated measures in order to assure their equality of access to the political process. In our case, we may envisage these measures as for example special programmes to boost civic participation and develop the community networks, genuine representation

of the Romanian communities at the local level, de facto anti-discrimination campaigns, an so on.

The principle that both Dahl and Young have in mind when they speak about political equality is that every individual is *entitled* to it due to the fact that she is affected by the political decision. To be affected by the consequences of the exercise of power and have no word about it means to dismiss any commitment to the value of individual freedom and self-determination. The question that arises in our case is if the Romanians are actually affected, or in which way, taking into account that more than one third of them are quite sure they will return. Experience also shows that most of the EU migrants (decades ago the Spaniards, the Italians and the Portuguese) and lately the Poles (in Alcalá they are almost half now in comparison to ten years ago) returned to their country of origin due to the increase of the living standard there. Why would the local communities redistribute resources for individuals who plan to leave in the next 5 years? At the moment most of the Romanians are guests, and the democratic principles do not contemplate the problem of what we owe to guests, except for respect and assure them a pleasant stay.

As stated in the first part of the paper, there is an intrinsic relation between membership, affectedness principle and permanence. Affectedness is not limited only to the direct and present consequences of a political decision. Choosing to construct a new hospital instead of a better infrastructure for the city has long term consequences and affects the inhabitants on the long run. Somebody who knows that in little time will leave the town would not have an interest in participating at the debates regarding the hospital vs infrastructure. The political communities are reproduced throughout time due to the timeless compromise the individual makes with its past, present and future generations. Here I do not argue in a communitarian vein which promotes a thick and atemporal form of membership the individuals should be bound by. What I intend to say is that independently of the particular understandings of this membership, be it post-national or ethno-cultural, permanence is the condition of possibility of the survival and the reproduction of the political communities.

Moreover, the municipal level is not a bounded political community. In many cases their capacity to decide and manage resources is very limited. The regional and national levels have a much bigger weight in what concerns the needs of the inhabitants of a city. The cities and towns do not have the capacities to tax and distribute resources as they find properly. But even if in this invisible mechanism we may presuppose that the taxes an inhabitant from Madrid pays would go for the construction of a hospital in Alcalá, that would not be seen as an injustice, as both the Madrid and the Alcalá inhabitants have a shared membership which makes legitimate claims of equality and redistribution. For certain, an inhabitant of Madrid would not understand why his taxes may be redistributed so that the Alcalá city hall undertakes special measures for promoting the civic participation among Romanians who in little time would return to their country.

The EU citizenship conception avoids this tension between perpetual mobility and local citizenship based on residence. The EU citizens are not considered guests, but there is no provision on what claims of justice and equality they might actually have. This may also be the case as when the Maastricht Treaty was signed, there was no doubt of the civic political cultures of the EU states. Few

would have imagined that the Germans in Spain would organize only around the church and would send the priest to talk to the mayor. The EU citizenship has a tacit presupposition of a common ground which allows mobile self-interested individuals to go to a member state city and there become active citizens. It presupposes that the equality of opportunities is already a reality of the European space, and all that is needed is individual will and political openness. What the EU citizenship does not contemplate is that the individual capabilities necessary to be an EU citizen are not a universal fact, even more after the enlargement, and that the local contexts where the citizenship is supposed to put its first seed are not post-national closed communities.

The supporters of a republican understanding of the Union citizenship (Castiglione 2006; Chryssochoou 2006) may argue that in the EU case the affectedness principle should be decoupled of its atemporal character. The remote possibility to be a mobile individual entails the right to choose the place of residence and at the same time have the normative claim to equal access to the process of decision making. The affectedness principle should not regard who is going to be affected tomorrow by the political decisions taken today but to claim that all those who are present today in a context are affected by the political decision. In this case, although many of the Romanians are not permanent members of their localities of residence, they are entitled to differentiated measures in order to assure their equal access to the process of decision making.

This kind of understanding of the affectedness principle is in direct contradiction with the possibility to participate in the political life of the country of origin. To claim that the temporary absentees have a moral claim to participate in the political life of their home country (Bauböck 2007a: 2447) means to attach a temporal-related interpretation to the affectedness principle. Although temporary emigrant workers have the residence abroad, the perspective of return makes them legitimate stakeholders in their homeland political communities. That is because a political decision which is taken today affects directly or indirectly the life circumstances of the citizens it bounds on the long run.

The above observation brings into discussion the necessity to take into account the transnational political ties between the migrant EU citizens and their country of origin. As shown in the empirical analysis, the Spanish and the Romanian parties already made agreements to support each other in elections where Romanian migrants are involved. These formal agreements spilled over beyond pure campaign rhetoric when the visit with electoral shades of the Romanian president had been financed by the government of the Madrid AC. The question that arises is to how much support are entitled the Romanian migrants regarding the politics of their country of origin. Even if we start from a flexible understanding of the affectedness principle and suppose that the Romanians have claims of political equality based on the principle of mobility in their residence context and at the same time claims of political participation in their homeland based on their status as temporary absentees, it is still not obvious why the political structures in the receiving context should support political transnationalism in the country of origin. Why should the Spanish residents of Alcalá not see it as an injustice?

One possible answer would be that the Romanian and Spanish parties are not political

organizations of two “foreign” countries. The ties are already institutionalized at supranational level. The problem with the Euro-parties is that they are “umbrella type organizations” (Day and Shaw 2006: 113) which act as a prolongation of the national parties. The few initiatives to “territorialize” the Euro-parties and confer them a closer contact with the citizens, the PES-LA initiative, have failed because the lack of support from both national and European forums (ibid). For this reason the joint activities of the Spanish-Romanian lefts and rights float in a normative and institutional indeterminacy which may seem as an unfair practice to many citizens. In this case, the answer to the question of how much support for their transnational political ties are the Romanians entitled to in the context of residence depends on how far we want to push the role and the scope of the Euro-parties. Indeed, if we conceive the European parliament as the platform from where *localized* and overlapped forms of representation may emerge, than the Romanians may be entitled to active support for their transnational activities. In this case, the political representation is not composed by two divergent functions in the country of origin and in the context of residence, but it is rather a possibility of overlapped patterns and convergent ways of understanding the concrete political experiences of EU citizens.

A counter argument that may be brought to this perspective is that it presupposes unfair treatment for the national residents of the member states. As Baböck (2007b) argues, the direct protection of second-country nationals (EU citizens residing in another member state) rights by the EU law that does not apply to first country nationals (EU citizens residing in their home state) may generate the paradoxical situation when the EU migrants have more rights than the EU citizens residing in their country of origin. Arguing in the same line, I consider that convergent local practices of representation should be a possibility for any EU citizen who chooses to use his right of free movement and at the same time make claims of political equality. Many of the institutional arrangements we are subject to are not universal opportunities, but rather contextual ones which are activated depending on the life circumstances or individual elections. Social security after an accident is an entitlement only for those who had an accident; however, it is a remote possibility for each individual.

### **Conclusion**

This paper dealt with a series of theoretical questions about the scope and understanding of political participation and representation of mobile individuals starting from the case study of the Romanian community in several Spanish cities. I tried to argue that the principle of freedom of movement the EU citizenship is based on hides an intrinsic tension between the affectedness principle and the claims of political equality. Moreover, I consider that the Union conception of citizenship does not take into account the political ties that still remain between the mobile EU citizens and their country of origin and in this case fails to give a comprehensive account about what claims of just representation and political participation they may have.

The case-study presented helps us understand the complex practices of citizenship that are

generated at local and transnational levels, which go beyond the tacit presupposition that the EU citizenship is easily realizable due to the post-national and fluid conceptions about politics that binds the Union space together. What we could observe is that the skills required in order to realize the EU project are not a natural gift, neither of the individuals, nor of the political contexts in which they move. Due to the fact that the political communities are still anchored in a territorial and atemporal understanding of their membership and at the same time open to the mobility of individuals, patterns of unequal treatment may appear. The fundamental question is how to assure the political equality in cases where traditional normative categories, as the principles of affectedness, inclusion and cohesion do not find their correspondence in reality.

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