

This is a peer-reviewed, accepted author manuscript of the following article: Borz, G. (Accepted/In press). Political parties and diaspora: a case study of Romanian parties' involvement abroad. *Parliamentary Affairs*.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsaa044>

POLITICAL PARTIES AND DIASPORA: A CASE STUDY OF ROMANIAN PARTIES' INVOLVEMENT ABROAD

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Acknowledgements:

The author would like to express her gratitude to Beatrice Andriana Ciolacu, Michael Bellis Kuntz and Daniel Braby for invaluable research assistance with this project.

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Abstract

How do parties organize for success in engaging with their diaspora? This study investigates the impact Romanian diaspora has had on national political parties. It develops an argument based on diaspora recognition, engagement and policy as implemented by old and new parties. The analysis shows that recognition in party statutes is not a guarantee for engagement. The latter increases with the use of new on-line communication strategies, provided there is demand for such communication platforms. New parties with a strong anti-corruption stance mobilize diaspora on-line. The policy strategy emphasizes diaspora support rather than diaspora return as incumbent parties take a gradual approach based on rights and identity promotion, which increases the economic utility of the engagement. The results are based on the analysis of party statutes, governmental documents, party on-line communication strategies and interviews with party members.

Keywords: diaspora, political parties abroad, party organisation, diaspora policy

Diaspora, in the sense of people born in a country and living in another one (Beine et al 2011) is the subject of scholarly literature pertaining to international relations – foreign policy (Shain 1994; Mearsheimer and Walt 2007), economics- economic development and capital flows (Smart and Hsu 2004; Lesblang 2017) sociology, political geography. In political science, studies of diaspora focus on emigration policies (Gamlen 2006, 2019; Levitt and Dehesa 2003; Müge 2012), voting rights and other diaspora institutions (IDEA 2018), type of states which engage diaspora and more recently on the ways political parties organise abroad (Rashkova and Staak, 2020). The relationship between parties and diaspora has been conceptualized under the party abroad umbrella concept (Rashkova 2020). Within this strand of literature this paper investigates diaspora's impact on home country policies and party politics.

This article discusses the impact of diaspora on home country party politics. In the conditions of growing migration the relationship between parties and diaspora requires further investigation. In particular, of interest is the level of specific party regulation devoted to this relationship and the policies adopted to engage diaspora or to bring diaspora back home. In other words, has the increasingly growing diaspora had any impact on government policies and on party's organisational and electoral strategies?

The analysis focuses on the case of Romania, an East-European country with rapidly growing diaspora (Eurostat 2018)¹. In addition to its size, the Romanian diaspora sends back home the highest amount of remittances in Europe (Eurostat 2018). Additionally, Romanian diaspora is politically active by voting in large numbers in legislative and presidential elections and through organising anti-government demonstrations back home. All these factors make Romania a good case for testing whether these conditions foster engagement between political parties and diaspora. Furthermore, the case provides a good ground for examining the extent to which parties are adopting organisational and policy strategies aimed at harnessing this electoral and economic potential.

BACKGROUND: ROMANIAN DIASPORA

Romanian diaspora has recently shown political activism and progressive electoral preferences, which could both mobilise voters back home. Romanians abroad gained increased media attention especially when at the presidential elections the electoral preferences of the diaspora, different from those of home, electors influenced the final winner. It can be argued that this occurred in 2009 when the votes from the diaspora constituency took longer to count given the different time zones in which the polling stations were located. As a consequence they were reported last by the Romanian Permanent Electoral Bureau and contributed to the marginal win of Traian Basescu (Libertatea 2009). Diaspora's policy preferences have been different compared to preferences back home. Net preference for the new parties fighting corruption has been shown in the 2016 legislative elections results. The same pattern has maintained in the 2019 presidential elections. This is an electoral gain that political parties could actively mobilize.

High political mobilization have started to manifest when diaspora organised protests both at home and abroad (Buzasu 2019). The lack of engagement with the diaspora from the Romanian state and the profound disappointment with government performance back home has determined Romanian diaspora to organise demonstrations in Bucharest in 2018 and again in 2019. This showed an increased level of activism which could potentially be harnessed by political parties.

In a context of a rising Romanian diaspora (across Europe but also elsewhere), the question is if incumbent and opposition parties have adapted their organisation and electoral strategies in order to include and mobilize diaspora. Like in the Italian case (see Piccio 2020) Romanian diaspora votes in legislative, presidential and European elections are counted in a separate district². This opportunity structure can generate party responses in the organisational and electoral arena. In order to maximize their gains, the expectation is that parties organise or adopt policies and electoral strategies aimed at engaging diaspora. Henceforth this article is

¹ According to Eurostat statistics, as of 2018 Romanian diaspora is ranked fifth in terms of diaspora size originating from an European country after Germany, Spain, United Kingdom and France. UN 2019 estimations for Romanian diaspora were around 3,5 million.

² Only a few other countries such as Italy and Spain diaspora votes are counted in a dedicated district.

testing three main propositions of diaspora engagement: organisational, electoral and policy adoption model.

ARGUMENT AND HYPOTHESES

This article develops an argument of party involvement abroad based on three processes: diaspora recognition, diaspora engagement and diaspora policy. Recognition is the first step towards engagement. It can take place in party statutes and other party documents or legal documents such as constitutions, party laws or electoral laws. Engagement depends on parties' perceived electoral benefits and on their organisational capacity for mobilizing diaspora. Party finance is not key for diaspora engagement as digital engagement take over given the residence abroad of diaspora voters. The party's organisational strategy for success abroad does not prioritize local branches with offices and paid staffs but instead it focuses on a digital strategy for engagement with diaspora. Dedicated Facebook or twitter accounts can make a difference if there is a demand for them as well. Subsequently the type of diaspora policies adopted by the state of origin depend on the economic and political situation of the country and on whether the incumbent parties have diaspora as their target for electoral support or not.

Party Organisational strategies

State of origin and diaspora relations can range from recognition to specific support or return policies. Consequently, states of origin develop institutions in order to embrace diaspora, to tap diaspora for resources or to govern diaspora (Délano and Gamlen 2014, Gamlen et al 2019). Following the same reasoning, before engaging with diaspora, this article posits that parties will start by recognising diaspora in formal party documents. This is expected to be particularly relevant in states of origin where diaspora has extensive voting rights as opposed to states of origin where diaspora's political rights are not legally acknowledged (Østergaard-Nielsen and Ciornei, 2019). While Romanian parties do not have registered branches abroad it is expected that their engagement with Romanian diaspora to be present first in party documents such as statutes or programmes.

In relation to the institutionalization of parties, which literature has shown is important for party development and party electoral success (cf, Harmel and Svasand 1993), the organisational recognition of diaspora is expected to be more entrenched in the statutes of old parties. These parties have a high level of institutionalization meaning that they succeeded to compete in more than three subsequent elections and are more known to voters (cf. Janda 1980, Rose and Mackie 1988). Even if party leadership is not always stable, they manage to build a strong organisational structure. The experience accumulated by a party with a strong organisational complexity will be easily replicated and implemented for diaspora.

In the context of this article, post-communist parties, formed immediately after the revolution have more experience on the political realm, have local organisations in place across the country and the largest number of members as well. These parties and other new opposition

parties have already invested resources in developing their organisational apparatus across the country. What this implies is that adding a new “branch” devoted to diaspora should not be a costly exercise for the old institutionalized parties. Quite the reverse, the set-up of a diaspora branch would mean a replication of an already well-known organisational routine process. Consequently, the first proposition stipulates that:

P1 Organisational. *Diaspora recognition is more intense in old institutionalized parties than in new less institutionalized parties.*

Diaspora Engagement strategies

Diaspora engagement through various activities depends on party resources and strategic planning (Rashkova and Staak 2019). If the gain is perceived to be long-term votes, both types of parties are expected to devote attention to diaspora in their statutes and to allocate resources to activities organized abroad. This means that both more and less institutionalized parties can be expected to formally engage with diaspora.

A key intervening variable in this process is the level of policy convergence and issue salience convergence between voters and parties. New political parties, which have not participated in more than three elections and which have a clear anti-corruption stance are expected to engage more with Romanians abroad. The first reason behind this appeal is the fight against corruption. Most newly registered parties have an anti-corruption stance, position which is very much in line with the values of Romanian diaspora who organized protests against the corrupt government two years in a row. By contrast, old parties (communist successor parties) such as the social democrats, renowned for their corrupt leaders, are being perceived as the old political class and are least favoured by diaspora voters.

Social media brings a new dimension to the level of engagement as resources do not have to be abundant in order to communicate with diaspora. The use of social media lowers considerably the cost of communication (Gibson 2013). The party does not have use a large amount of financial resources in order to communicate with diaspora. The professionalized model of campaign management can be replaced or can run in parallel with on-line campaigning. Events such as conferences can be organised via Facebook, Twitter or Skype. Facebook can be used extensively to connect with party members or party sympathizers who leave abroad. If the party strategically decides to mobilize diaspora because engage with diaspora it will do so regardless of the level of resources they have allocated for these activities. On-line engagement is expected to be used by both type of parties. However, given that social media is used mainly by young voters, on-line engagement is expected to be used with a higher intensity by those new parties that appeal to young voters. Following this logic, the next proposition stipulates that:

P2 Engagement. *New parties are expected to conduct more online engagement than old parties.*

Economic gains: migration support vs migration return policies

Overall, the origin-state policies may involve diaspora support or diaspora return measures. Diaspora support measures are expected in all origin states where the political elite wants to harness the electoral and economic potential of diaspora. Support can range from rights provision (right to vote, right to double citizenship) to cultural, educational and identity preservation programmes, which all involve a financial contribution from the origin state. These measures will maintain diaspora's attachment to the country of origin, will encourage political mobilization and a home country oriented behaviour. This includes not only voting in origin state national elections but also in remittance flows, donations or investments in the country of origin. Developing countries are in particular more interested in engaging diaspora in order to keep their economies growing. Remittances are needed by these economies and the origin state facilitates the money flow. Origin-states can also resort to governments issued diaspora bonds (Bunyk, 2015) in order to harness the economic potential of diaspora.

This article argues that diaspora return policies go hand in hand with the economic needs of the origin-state but they are expected to intensify after the origin state has devoted some attention to diaspora support policies. Various rights, such as double citizenship, extended to diaspora have proved efficient in encouraging remittances and return migration (Leblang 2017). Diaspora return policies tap into the human capital and the knowledge transfer opportunities coming from diaspora. Migrants become communities of knowledge, which will help and globalize national development (Gamlen 2013). These type of measures require more financial commitment from the origin-state in order to capitalize on the human capital represented by diaspora.

The growing size of Romanian diaspora means that the country has been confronted with a decline of labour force and a growing number of pensioners (National Institute for Statistics, 2020). In this situation, the incumbent parties are expected to focus on measures aimed at bringing back the workforce lost in order to sustain the economy. Under this scenario, measures of diaspora return adopted by governments should prevail in number. The other scenario could be that governments choose to engage more with diaspora in order to keep the money flow from abroad constant. Under this second scenario, measures of diaspora support are expected

Considering that Romania is a relatively young democracy, with less resources available to engage on a permanent basis with its diaspora, the expectation is that currently the economic gains policy is likely to prevail in the short-run and will be followed by long term strategies for diaspora return.

P3 Policy: *Diaspora support policies adopted by incumbent parties are expected to prevail over diaspora return policies.*

DATA AND METHOD

The investigation of Romanian parties abroad focuses on incumbent and opposition parties with parliamentary representation. A text analysis of Romanian party statutes from 2007 until 2018 was conducted in order to gauge the level of recognition diaspora receives from Romanian parties and whether diaspora had any impact on parties' organisation. Party statutes were checked for the use of terms such as "diaspora", "Romanians abroad", "Romanians

outside national borders”. The aim is to compare the attention diaspora receives in the party statutes. Of particular interest are the organisational strategies (diaspora branches, their financial resources) which should give us an indication of how well diaspora is embedded in parties’ organisation and activity and whether parties want to pursue a link with diaspora as a short or long-term party goal.

In order to measure the specific involvement of parties abroad, this paper investigates the level of engagement with diaspora either via face-to-face activities or via on-line avenues. Interviews with party members from diaspora were conducted in order to reveal the most prevalent activities conducted by parties abroad and the communication methods used. Additionally the Facebook and Twitter diaspora dedicated accounts were scrutinised for their level of activity (start of activity, number of posts, number of followers).

Parties’ policy focus regarding diaspora is analysed by comparing the policy outcomes and specific rights given to diaspora through various laws adopted since the collapse of communism. These policies fall into two categories: diaspora support and diaspora return. Diaspora support includes policies which focus on voting rights, double citizenship etc., while diaspora return policies refer to specific strategies targeting the return of diaspora (financial incentives to start businesses, tax relief etc.).

ANALYSIS

Recognition

Diaspora receives recognition in the statutes of all Romanian parties (Table 1). Any Romanian living abroad can join a party back home and become a member. Diaspora membership has the right to send delegates to party congresses and can run as candidates on party lists. Party statutes use mainly the term “diaspora” to refer to Romanians living abroad. Other terms such as “Romanians living abroad”, “Romanians from everywhere”, “Romanians outside the country’s borders” are less frequently used by parties in their statutes³.

In terms of attention, as Table 1 shows, diaspora does not receive more discussion in the statutes of new parties, even if those parties have a large proportion of their members in diaspora or their members returned from diaspora. If one looks at the columns which percentage of total word count and articles devoted to diaspora in party statutes, the actual figures are rather low. This is not entirely surprising because diaspora is just one aspect in the overall party organisation. In most cases, diaspora appears in the sections of the statute, which deal with membership and overall party organisation.

³ PMP (Popular Movement Party) uses the term Romanians outside the country’s borders, especially when referring to neighbouring Republic of Moldova, which historically was part of Romania.

Between 1 and 5 percent of the paragraphs in a party statute are devoted to diaspora. Overall, these are low percentages which can be explained by the fact that diaspora appears in those sections of party statutes, which relate to party membership. Similarly, the percentage of articles devoted specifically to diaspora range between 2 and 7 percentage points. Out of these, the highest attention on paper given to diaspora comes from PSD (Social Democratic Party). PSD, the post-communist successor party not surprisingly devotes the highest number of articles in its statute to diaspora. The answer relies in the fact that, in the Romanian party system it can be classified as an old and well-institutionalized party. It has one of the highest levels of party nationalization (Borz and de Miguel 2019) with branches well developed all across the country. Its statute is one of the longest as well, almost twice as long as the statutes of other younger parties such as ALDE or USR in 2017. The lowest and constant attention to diaspora is given by UDMR because they represent the interests of the Hungarian minority and fight for their interest in Romania and not abroad.

Even if the attention given on paper is not overwhelming, almost all parties devote some attention to diaspora (Table 1). This is not surprising considering the electoral rights of diaspora and hence the high incentives for parties to campaign and for Romanians abroad to vote. The trend across time is nevertheless towards an increase in the recognition of diaspora across most party statutes. With the exception of PSD where the trend seems to be reversed, most parties include diaspora in additional structures of their organisation. For example, from 2007 until 2017, PNL (The National Liberal Party) one of the old parties, has more than doubled the attention devoted to diaspora in its statute. By 2017, the PNL Diaspora branch receives the same rights as any other local/country branch and is organised under the same rules as the county party branches. Similarly, from 2017 to 2019, USR (Save Romania Union), one of the newest parties registered in 2016, has added details with relation to how the local organisations, including the diaspora branch, are going to receive their financial resources from the party central office. However, recognition on paper (statutes) does not give a complete picture of how much Romanian political parties are involved abroad and how much are they interacting with diaspora.

[Table 1: Attention devoted to diaspora by party programmes about here]

A more detailed text analysis of party statutes shows how Romanian parties organise diaspora members. As table 2 below illustrates, Romanian parties are very much centralized when it comes to dealing with their members abroad. Diaspora has the right to organise in a local branch but that branch is located in the capital city. This runs across all parties included in the analysis. For example, as the PSD (2015, art. 152, 228) party statute stipulates, the county / sector organizations in Bucharest have legal personality and their own management. This implies they carry out all necessary steps to register and obtain the unique tax identification code. The diaspora branch receives financial resources from the party central office as any other local branch.

Out of all parties included in analysis, only two (PNL and ALDE) mention that their diaspora branch has subsequent organisations in other countries where Romanians live abroad. PNL

statute provides the most details in this regards. They also recognise the need for regional organisations of diaspora, whereby diaspora branches from neighbouring countries come together and form a Regional organisation (PNL statute 2017, art. 43-45). What is common however across all party statutes investigated, is that the activity of all party members from diaspora is coordinated by the Diaspora branch/organisation with the headquarters in Bucharest. The same level of centralization applies to the allocation of resources – each diaspora organisation receives finance from the party central office (see table 2 below).

[Table 2. Party organisation with members from diaspora about here]

What party statutes show is a clear organisational branch devoted to diaspora, always with headquarters in the capital city and with the same organisational structure, rights and duties as any other local branch. Diaspora branches also follow the same organisational and functioning rules as any other local branch. For example, according to the PSD statute (2015, article 59) the local organisation/branch has the following organisational structures: General Assembly, Executive Committee and Local Bureau. The Party General Secretary Office coordinates party activity at the central level and communicates with all party local branches, including the diaspora branch (USR 2017 statute, article 58).

What one can conclude by looking at the party statutes, is that diaspora gets recognition by both old and new parties. The intensity of party regulation when it comes to diaspora is slightly higher in the old parties (PSD and PNL) which is in line with the expectations of P1. These older and more institutionalized parties have a longer experience in the political system, have a more detailed and more developed organisational structure across the country and that is transposed in the organisation of their diaspora branch (at least on paper).

Engagement

When the level of diaspora engagement comes into scrutiny, a certain level of informality is common across parties. Diaspora branch meetings or communication channels are not detailed in the statutes or any other party documents. More information about how diaspora members meet and communicate can be found from the actual members. Interviews with diaspora members reveal that new parties (such as USR) have diaspora branch across all European countries where a large Romanian community can be found. Each country branch has a representative and they meet on a monthly basis in a different location. All members are invited to the monthly meetings, the party covers the transport but not the accommodation. Communication with diaspora members is done via e-mail and facebook, conferences are most of the time organized via skype and the member involvement in candidate or policy selection is done via an internal portal available solely to party members.

When it comes to meetings organised by the party or various events to inform and recruit new members in diaspora the level of formal face-to-face engagement with diaspora seems to be

low. However, the level of ‘informal’ on-line engagement is much higher. Table 3 below provides a detailed account of how Romanian parties engage with diaspora on-line. The data shows whether parties hold a diaspora Facebook and Twitter account, but more importantly, whether those accounts have been active and followed by a large number of individuals.

While most parties hold a Facebook account directed at diaspora they are not all equally active at keeping the account active. The number of followers varies greatly across parties. Old parties such as PSD have no interest in keeping diaspora interested. Their Facebook page was last update din 2017 and the number of followers is low. PNL is the only old party, which could keep up in this regards, has an updated Facebook page and a much higher number of followers when compared to PSD. The new party USR leads when it comes to on-line engagement. They have the highest number of followers on Facebook and also the most active Diaspora Twitter account. On the other hand, the old party PNL, has an open Twitter account but that account has never twitted. A few other new, but splinter parties (ALDE, PPR, PMP) show active Facebook activity aimed at engaging with diaspora but with a very low demand as shown by the number of their followers.

[Table 3. Parties’ online engagement with diaspora about here]

The data presented in Table 3 clearly shows a separation between old and new parties, with new parties much more active on-line. However, not all new parties are equally well organised on-line. While PMP and ALDE are also new splinter parties formed by old politicians, the on-line engagement conducted by the latter is minimal. The explanation behind these findings relies in the voter profile. The latter new parties are breakaways from old parties, which do not appeal to new voters. On the other hand, USR, with a strong anti-corruption appeal and a high number of members in diaspora has a strong youth support. The largest group of its potential voters are in the age group between 18 and 30 (CURS, 2018). This type of voter is exactly the one interested in following a Facebook or a Twitter page. P2 is hence only partly supported. The intervening variable in this case is the age of members/voters. The younger the voting pool of a party, the higher the probability of an active on-line diaspora engagement. PNL is the only old party which manages to engage with diaspora on-line (table 3). As in the case of USR, PNL’s support base does include a large proportion of young votes. Its support abroad has been larger in the last two presidential elections where the anti-corruption message has been stronger.

Diaspora Policy

The policy proposition stipulated that the focus of diaspora policies is more towards diaspora support/recognition rather than diaspora return. Diaspora was not a topical issue for discussion in the media or Romanian politics until 2007 when Romania joined the EU. As more Romanians travelled abroad and found jobs within the EU, the size of Romanian diaspora grew at a fast pace and with it the amount of money Romanian diaspora would send home. According to Eurostat data, Romanian diaspora has sent the largest amount of personal remittances back to the home country in 2018. Figure 1 presents the growing trend of personal remittances from Romanian members of diaspora. The amounts increased especially after 2014 and are in line with increasing levels of Romanian migration.

[Figure 1. Romanian Diaspora remittances (Eurostat: 2012-2018) about here]

The personal remittance data between 2012 and 2018 which shows figures well above the European average (Figure 1) are a good justification for Romanian governments' diaspora support policies rather than return policies. Governments want the money flow in the economy in order to keep the economy growing. An analysis of the policies adopted so far for diaspora show a mixed of the two policy types, with a current prevalence for the support policies rather than return policies. It is expected that the support policies will pick up in the next years when more right wing governments could focus on return policies.

Table 4 presents a detailed account of diaspora related governments policies. The focus lies on support for diaspora rather than diaspora return. The central focus policy in the past years was the right to vote as Romanian Embassies could not cope with the high numbers of Romanians who turned up to vote (Borz 2019). As a consequence, the electoral laws were amended to include special provisions for diaspora voting abroad. It is only diaspora who can now vote over three days during national and presidential elections. Diaspora has also been granted the right to vote by post. These measures have boosted diaspora turnout in the last 2019 presidential elections.

In addition to the right to vote included immediately after 1990, specific representation rights were included after 2008 with the creation of a special electoral district for Romania under party-list proportional system (Vintila and Soare 2018). Support policies were adopted in 2007 when Romania joined the European Union. These support policies refer mainly to rights in relation education and the promotion of Romanian culture and values abroad. According to law 299/2007 (art. 4) Romanians abroad have among others the right to study in Romania at all levels and forms of education, to apply for educational scholarships in Romania, to request and obtain the financial or material support of the Romanian state for supporting the cultural, artistic and religious manifestations of the Romanians everywhere, to participate in the Congress of Romanians Everywhere. The Ministry for Romanians abroad is the governmental institution which implements the policies above. In 2016 the parliament adopted the law on the instituting the Romanian community centers abroad with the aim of increasing the social cohesion of Romanian diaspora. National Strategy for Romanians adopted by the Romanian government in 2017 subsequently transposed and expanded the diaspora rights already mentioned in the Constitution in an ordinary law. Most objectives in this strategy relate to supporting the Romanian identity and the rights of Romanians abroad together with increasing their social cohesion.

[Table 4. Type of diaspora policies adopted by Romanian governments post 1990 about here]

Compared to other countries in the region, diaspora return policies were rather scarce. Only from 2014 diaspora entrepreneurship started to be encouraged (see table 4). By 2017 more specialized programmes involving diaspora in the development of the Romanian economy arose. However these programmes are much smaller in number in comparison to the diaspora support programmes. This evidence is in line with P3.

CONCLUSION

What one can conclude from this analysis is that the involvement of Romanian parties abroad is in a process of development. Institutionalization is as a key intervening factor for explaining the formal recognition and organisation of parties across diaspora. Old parties are slightly more organized when it comes to diaspora. However, recognition on paper does not go hand in hand with the actual level of engagement. The Romanian data shows that while recognition on paper is higher for older parties, new parties conduct a much more informal (not specified in the statute or other party rules) and on-line engagement with their diaspora in line with their pool of voters and their on-line activities.

New parties are not as highly institutionalized or nationalized as old parties but they do engage much more on-line with diaspora. Informality turns out to be a more spread and effective way of interacting with diaspora members. USR the new party with a large number of members in diaspora signals to be a new type of party with young professionals in their ranks and with more informality in running its affairs. This type of organisation seems to suit diaspora and echoes the characteristics of a new function, a new *modus operandi* for parties (Rashkova 2020). Its diaspora members make use of on-line technologies as these are also a practical way of keeping in touch with families back home. An avenue for further research is the policy convergence and issue salience between parties' abroad and their voters.

Policies adopted by incumbent parties revolve around support for diaspora and not so much around diaspora return. This is very much in line with economic theories of migration (Gamlen 2014) which posit that the type of state engaging with diaspora will make an impact on the diasporic policies adopted by that state. Romania is a developing economy which 24 years after the collapse of communism just starts to encourage the return of its diaspora. Given the high amount of personal remittances coming from Romanians abroad, the Romanian state adopted a gradual process of engagement with diaspora. First voting rights were granted and later amended to improve the voting conditions. Subsequently more measures to support the identity, culture and rights of Romanians abroad followed. Only recently more return oriented policies started to take shape. All in all incumbent parties adopted a utilitarian rationale in combination with an identity based rationale when adopting policies which altogether contribute to a long term strategy for harnessing the economic and electoral potential of diaspora.

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Tables

Table 1: Attention devoted to diaspora by party programmes

Party	Year	total word count statute	Total word count paragraphs diaspora related	% paragraphs	N articles statute	N articles diaspora related	% articles
PSD	2018	20300	749	4	238	19	8
PSD	2015	20511	746	4	239	17	7
PSD	2013	22525	1098	5	255	23	9
PNL	2017	14832	236	2	149	8	5
PNL	2007	10791	84	1	112	2	2
USR	2019	14098	235	2	92	6	7
USR	2017	12703	193	2	91	5	5
UDMR	2017	16029	112	1	130	3	2
UDMR	2015	15515	82	1	130	2	2
UDMR	2011	15006	60	0	132	3	2
ALDE	2017	12009	124	1	108	3	3
PMP	2018	13807	284	2	168	7	4
PDL*	2011	13690	262	2	148	7	5
PDL*	2007	13360	0	0	169	0	0
PPR	2019	4032	22	1	56	1	2

Source: party statutes; PSD- Social Democratic Party; PNL – National Liberal Party; USR- Union Save Romania; ALDE – Alliance of Liberal and Democrats in Romania; PMP- Popular Movement Party; PDL – Liberal Democrat Party; PPR – Pro Romania Party; Note: bold denotes relatively new parties registered within the last decade; *merged into PNL in 2007;

Table 2. Party organisation with members from diaspora

party	members diaspora	Diaspora =local branch in capital city	finance from party central office	diaspora dedicated website
PSD	yes	Yes	yes-central office+local branch (art 152, art 228/statut 2015)	no
PNL	yes	Yes	central office+local branch (art 141/statut 2017)	http://www.pnldiaspora.ro/
USR	yes	Yes	yes-local branch (32%)+central office	https://diaspora.usr.ro/
UDMR	yes	Yes	yes-central office+local branch (art 99/statut 2011)	no
ALDE	yes	Yes	yes -central office+local branch	no
PMP	yes	Yes	yes -central office+local branch	no
PDL	yes	Yes	Yes	no
PPR	yes	Yes	central office+local branch	no
PLUS	yes	Yes	Yes	no

Source: Political Parties statutes; Note: bold denotes new parties registered within the last decade;

Table 3. Parties' online engagement with diaspora

Diaspora branch	FACEBOOK ACTIVITY			TWITTER ACTIVITY		
Party	account	followers	last activity	account	followers	N tweets
PSD	Yes	545	Jan-17	No	-	-
PNL	Yes	11265	Jan-20	Yes	19	No tweets
USR	Yes	48409	Dec-19	Yes	757	312 tweets
UDMR	No	-	-	No	-	-
ALDE	Yes	140	Jan-20	No	-	-
PMP	Yes	61	Jun-18	No	-	-
PDL	Yes	-	Oct-10	No	-	-
PPR	Yes	4	Dec-19	No	-	-
PLUS	Yes	5331	Jan-20	No	-	-

Source: *Diaspora dedicated Party Facebook accounts*: <https://www.facebook.com/psddispora/>; <https://www.facebook.com/DiasporaPNL/>; <https://www.facebook.com/diaspora.usr.ro/>; <https://www.facebook.com/pg/DiasporaALDE/videos/>; <https://www.facebook.com/PMPDiaspora/>; <https://www.facebook.com/pdl.diaspora/>; <https://www.facebook.com/Pro-Romania-Diaspora-811194679262687/>; <https://www.facebook.com/PLUSDiaspora/>; *Diaspora dedicated party Twitter accounts*: <https://twitter.com/pnldiaspora?lang=en>; <https://twitter.com/diasporausr?lang=en> last accessed 30 January 2020; Note: bold denotes relatively new parties registered within the last decade; Note: bold denotes new parties;

Table 4. Type of diaspora policies adopted by Romanian governments post 1990

Diaspora support	Diaspora return
<p>Law nr. 68/1992 for the election of Chamber of Deputies and Senate (vote in national elections)</p> <p>Law 370/ 20 September 2004 (vote presidential elections)</p> <p>Law 299/ 13 November 2007 for support granted to Romanians abroad (support granted to Romanians living abroad)</p> <p>Law no 35/2008 A constituency for Romanians living abroad was added to the 42 electoral constituencies</p> <p>Law 208/2015 postal voting for non-resident Romanians</p> <p>Law 86/2016 Law for the establishment of Romanian community centres abroad</p> <p>HG 405/2017 National Strategy for Romanians everywhere 2017-2020</p> <p>Law 148/2019 for amending electoral laws (vote by correspondence; higher number of members in the electoral bureau)</p> <p>HG 630/2019 Calendar program for actions necessary during presidential elections (vote over 3 days, valid only for diaspora)</p>	<p>The Human Capital Operational Program (POCU) 2014-2020 stimulates entrepreneurship among Romanian citizens from diaspora and those who have recently returned to the country (Ministry for Romanians abroad 2014)</p> <p>Diaspora partner for the development of Romania (2017)</p>

Sources: Chamber of deputies database <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/>; Ministry (Department) of Romanians abroad: <http://www.mprp.gov.ro/web/>;

Figure 1. Personal Remittances (Million euro)

