

Taxation Without Representation: How Much Does It Hurt?
EU free-movers' views on their political representation

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Paper presented to the conference on

The Future of European Citizenship

University of York, Toronto, Canada, 18-19 October 2012

FIRST DRAFT ONLY

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Introduction

Although the EU launched its first citizenship programme in 1992 with considerable fanfare, arguably nothing much changed for employees who had already moved to another member-state. True, the system of aggregation of entitlements and 'pro-ratarisation', launched in 1957, is continually being developed and perfected. But in terms of political citizenship -- traditionally understood as the right to vote and to stand for election -- free movers both then and subsequently have gained few new rights. Their right to vote for the government of the day remains fully curtailed by nationality barriers. As Shaw (2007) remarked, '...the denial of rights remains the status quo...'. So while the number of employees moving to jobs in other MS may be increasing at a faster rate than before 1992, the result is, arguably, an increase in taxpayers who cannot vote for the government that decides what to do with their taxes. This constitutes a return to taxation without representation. As a phenomenon, this can hardly be considered a democratic step forward, especially in the midst of new discourses on European Citizenship and democracy. It is perhaps worth noting that work on democracy such as Held (2006) considers forms of inclusion such as deliberative democracy but not the extension of suffrage.

As to how this phenomenon might be better understood, a numerical approach might be taken, asking how many people this affects. Before 2004, the European Labour Force survey successively put the figure at around 5 million of the European Community or Union's 300+ million population and it was still only 5,493,000 non-national citizens of the EU across 15 member-states, ie free movers, in 2004 and with the addition of the new member-states and cross-border movement between the new member-states, the potential voter base had risen to 6,480,000m (Shaw 2007:140) though it is not clear whether these are in fact adults of voting age or all citizens. In terms of total EU populations, it would still only have been 1.3% - a small minority. However the Eastern enlargement gave a boost to the free movement option and by 1 January 2009, non-national citizens of other EU states had risen to nearly 12m, or 2.4% of the total EU population. However, the totality of non-nationals in the EU still surpassed free movers at a rate of 1: 3.5 and stood at 31.9m (6.4%) on 1.01.2009 (Eurostat 2010).

Nonetheless, from a citizenship perspective, 6.5% of disenfranchised *Europeans* in the EU are a matter of concern, an anomaly that should be studied by national policymakers and at the intergovernmental level. As Peró and Solomos (2010) argue, migrants are commonly treated as **objects** of politics and [...] research on migrants as *subjects* of politics is limited and largely carried out through detached and structural approaches. [...]. This has 'overlooked migrants' conditions, experiences, subjectivities and practices as well as the focus of their engagement'. A qualitative approach is therefore useful in identifying aspects of the experience of disenfranchisement in terms of individual situations of 'taxation without representation', particularly the extent to which this causes affective reactions in those who cannot elect the government of the day under which they live.

This paper reports on findings of a qualitative research project in which focus groups were conducted with European Union non-nationals residing in three member-states, who can only vote in municipal and European Parliamentary elections. While the wider of citizens ideals for their political representation included extra-EU foreigners or recent naturalised citizens as participants in several focus groups, such as foreigners in Macedonia, Vietnamese in Poland etc, their experience is not reported in this paper due to lack of space. It therefore focused on the free movers, a special category of European citizen who are encouraged to move but prevented from taking part in general elections in the country where they live, in this case Spain, Poland and the UK. The methodology for this took some cues from Gamson (1992/1996) *Talking Politics* with its validation of qualitative approaches to investigating people's awareness of political issues through conversations rather than surveys. In particular, organised group discussions were held with over 20 participants recruited through the formalised channels of social and market research companies, with the discussions recorded in audio-visual studios, with simultaneous or subsequent interpretation from Polish to English and transcription of recordings.

Background

The European Union Justice Commissioner responsible for Citizenship may well have stated earlier this year that 'democracies cannot function without the link between the citizens and those who govern' (Reding 1.2.2012), but the fact remains that this link is usually understood in democratic theory as a mechanism of accountability, more precisely, an elective link. But to this, she did not refer.

One of the first citizenship rights in the EU was the right of employed people to move across borders in order to reside in another country in order to take up a job, just as a national of any country can change their residence within its borders so as to seek or take a job. This mover's right to residence in another member-state was thus limited to workers and their immediate family. But in 1992 the right to residence and employment was extended to all nationals of any member-state whatever their occupational status. In addition, a number of ECJ judgements, further EU legislative and administrative decisions, coupled with member-state level actions, have removed a

variety of boundaries that existed between countries in spheres that affect citizens' domestic and working life, reducing the power of national jurisdictions to enforce separations between one country and another. While formal national frontiers have been preserved, they have become porous or reduced to mere administrative demarcations in a number of instances (Threlfall 2003). In this sense, separate national borders, frontiers and jurisdictions have been falling during processes of cross-national social integration.

Yet there is an aspect of this otherwise growing area of pan-European citizenship rights and stipulations that has remained firmly ring-fenced by national borders is the right to vote for the parliament that forms the government of the day in each Member-state, a right that is to this day the preserve of those of the country's residents who hold its specific nationality. Such exceptions to general voting rights have remained the same since the EC's inception. When European Citizenship was launched in 1992, only local suffrage and the right to vote in the European Parliamentary were granted to EU citizens independently of their member-state nationality. Such limitations can be associated with the status quo before the formation of the European Community, when foreigners were classed as aliens and could not achieve this central political right of electing the government of the day unless they changed their nationality.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to note, in the context of discussion of EU Citizenship, that the very concept of citizenship has historically been equated with *political* citizenship and within this, with the right of persons to participate in 'collective decisions that regulate social life', including political participation, especially the right to vote (Bellamy 2008, p.1-2). In fact Bellamy (p.3) comes out against the trend to widen the meaning of citizenship precisely because it detracts from the distinctively *political* tasks citizens must perform to sustain the community, crucially, voting, campaigning and standing for office.

In this light, one could look critically at the continued absence of significant alien suffrage among EU member-states, despite the growing conceptual bulk of EU citizenship. Shaw (2002:195) has described as 'dissonance' the way states have accepted to give an extension of electoral rights to one group of foreigners – those from EU member-states - while rejecting the franchise for 3rd co nationals already living within their borders (who have not acquired citizenship). However, there is arguably rationality in the differentiation, since it based not only on reciprocity but also on membership of a community with strong rules on how the member-states must behave to each other politically and economically and regarding the welfare of the incomers. In particular it is linked to the desired creation of the single labour market, which occupies an iconic status in European community-building, with the equal treatment of free movers highly regulated in Community law, and extensively established in domestic law and business practice. In this sense the free movers' prohibition on participating in national politics in their country of legal residence arguably stands out as a contradiction to its own *internal* philosophy of integration. As Shaw (2007:168) remarks, we should be 'sanguine' about the achievements of the EU regarding citizenship issues.

Background: Taxation and representation

There is in addition the question of the link between citizenship and taxation. This has long been of interest to political thinkers, starting with as H.A.Foster (1898) and John Loude Tabberner (1859), who wrote that the axiom according to which those who pay the state expenses of the nation should have a voice in the Parliamentary representation of the country, ought to constitute one of the highest and most powerful constitutional rights. Indeed, the 18th Century slogan *No Taxation without Representation* summarized the grievances of British colonists in North America who were allowed no representation in the distant British Parliament. Though the exact origins of the term are not well established, the interesting point is that the slogan refers to cross-border taxation, namely, the right of the British Monarch to exact taxes from his dominions without giving them representation in Britain. The objection to this argued that:

“...no parts of His Majesty’s dominions can be taxed without their consent; that every part has a right to be represented in the supreme or some subordinate legislature...” (James Otis (1764) cited by J.L Bell 26.04.2009).

In other words, the notion of the right did not apply to individuals but to a geographical area with a block of residents in it.

This was the case again when the issue was reprised a decade ago when the US Senate discussed the *No Taxation without representation Act of 2002*, designed to amend an anomaly regarding residents of Washington D.C., which stated that 'In a country founded upon a cry of *No Taxation Without Representation!* D.C.’s lack of Congressional representation is an intolerable state of affairs that is incompatible with core American values'. Thus, it was the group of residents in DC that were seen as the offended parties. The Act called attention to the fact that an earlier bill of 2001 had proposed: "... that to the extent such representation is denied, residents of the District would be exempt from taxation" (US 107th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate, 2002 p.3). In other words, a denial of parliamentary voting rights is to be considered (in some quarters) so wrong that it must exempt citizens from contributing to the public purse.

Notably, the historic discussions around the notion of *No Taxation Without Representation* are largely focused on the perceived indignity of paying taxes rather than on the indignity of not being able to vote. In the more recent case of the state of Norway it is the other way round. It was the lack of representation that was found irksome, but the duty to pay contributions was accepted. Norway's situation as a member of the EEA but not of the EU has been described as a case of taxation without representation (Loken 2012) because the country makes a net contribution to the EU budget on a par with other Nordic member-states while not being represented on EU decision-making bodies. Loken found that Norwegian *state actors* believe this to be a democratic deficit. Yet a parallel 'publicity deficit' meant that the country's inability to vote was not really felt by members of the *public*.

By contrast, it is interesting to note that the Thatcher government was committed to another version of the link between representation and taxation, namely that any resident/potential voter should be subject to taxation at the local level, so that the connection should be made between the services demanded or provided through elected local government, and the fiscal contribution that paid for these (see Midwinter and Monaghan 1993).

In the case of the EU, the problem is also one of a bar on entering a decision-making area – parliament - while the obligation to pay taxes is not questioned. But rather than a specific geographical area finding itself barred, it is a population of individuals, potentially from any of 27 countries, scattered across the 27 member-states. This suggests the need for a qualitative study of the personal feelings of the 'taxed but unrepresented' non-national residents regarding their situation, adapting the question to the EU context, to free-moving 2nd country nationals.

It should also be mentioned that the issue of taxation is by no means the only base for arguing for 'alien' suffrage, as from another perspective, the denial of suffrage is part of a series of exclusions from political participation existing in the democratic world, such as for children, prisoners, felons, the mentally ill, and the intellectually disabled, which are argued to be 'intolerable' on principle (Beckman 2009). Those who see the absence of truly universal suffrage as a fault of democracy argue it should be attained on rational principled grounds.

How far do European tax-paying residents know or care about their representation? The question is generally under-researched, but a special EuroBarometer (2010, p.5, 6) questioned 27,000 members of the general public and found that a plurality of 48% believed that other EU nationals already had the right to vote and stand as a candidate in national parliamentary elections at present. As for regional assembly elections, 59% thought other EU nationals could vote– a double misperception that has arisen in spite of a publicity deficit. More precisely, in the survey respondents were unable to identify as false a proposition that such citizens did have the right to vote. This could be interpreted either as the public's willingness to allow them suffrage rights, or as disapproval of other EU nationals already having all the votes they could possibly want. In fact the Barometer (2010: 8) found a split between those one could call the *willing*, who thought 2nd-country EU nationals should have the right to vote in national and regional elections (50% and 53% for each); and the *disapproving* 43% and 39% who thought they should not. Notwithstanding the fact that the data reflects what established residents think of newcomer free movers rather than what the free movers think they ought to have for themselves, it is significant that a small majority of the populations in receiving country positions is nominally open to the idea that incomers should have right to vote.

In considering the degree of 'hurt' – in the sense of feeling aggrieved excluded by the fact of not being able to vote for the parliament, any study would do well to differentiate between the intra-EU migrant and the third-country national - the old

alien/foreigner non-national. This is due to the consideration – an assumption in research terms - that this 'hurt' might be of lesser magnitude if someone is barred on the grounds of mere nationality – the historic situation – than if someone is denied a vote for parliament after having their expectations raised by being labelled 'EU citizen', and being encouraged to become a free mover through the granting of a broad right of residence anywhere in the EU. In this context, nationality has mattered and acted as a rational explanation of a bar. Yet given the bypassing of nationality as a criterion in other instances of EU integration, it should be questioned in the case of participation in the constitution of a parliament. In traditional terms, this is the supreme act of political citizenship, and parliaments should represent the adult people whoever they are. But is it perceived by 2nd country residents as a mighty exclusion? What other factors related to moving to live in another country might condition the exercise of this right?

The topics of the focus group discussions were far more wide-ranging than the simple answers to the question Did you vote? And if you cannot, do you mind? They allowed free movers to explain how they had come to be where they are, their difficulties in re-settling, and the broader concept of what it means to engage in public affairs in a foreign country, especially when one's grasp of the language ranged from limited to very good but never 'native'. Participants also considered the relative merits of exercising agency at the local or wider levels and the issue of their representation generally.

The research findings, reflecting a qualitative design - albeit one containing a novel quantitative exercise performed by participants - contain some rare insights into an issue for which stakeholders have rarely been asked for their opinion, especially not at a comparative level. The findings remain nonetheless qualitative in nature but offer the basis for further representative sample survey work

Findings

Who are the freemovers?

Contrary to the original intention of the single labour market, many free-movers are not formerly unemployed manual labourers moving from a depressed part of the EC to a centre of growth for a job in a factory, nor corporate executives sent out by their companies, nor the professionals who have come to set up a business. Until 1992, an EC migrant was spoken about in the masculine, as a man with a dependent family who enjoyed derived rights. The study chose to invite mainly female participants in London and Barcelona and men and women in Warsaw, on the grounds that they would reveal more about the widespread but uncategorised world of part-time, non-specific white-collar employee and freelance EU migration. The first point to note, therefore is their profiles: they are 'volunteer migrants', not pushed out of their countries by unemployment nor specifically attracted by skilled jobs with higher wages in the

country of arrival. For instance the London group worked in: sales (x2), nursery teaching, waitressing x2, hairdressing and as a nanny. This is not to say that there are no free-moving Portuguese to be found in German factories, nor that Poles are not male plumbers or soil-digging labourers in Lincolnshire, nor that Slovakian and Romanian women are not actively recruited in for fruit-picking seasons in Spain. But that there cannot be a stereotype of the free mover as coming from a country with unemployed surplus manual labour, moving to fill shortages of labour elsewhere, nor as a business 'expats' nor as British and German pensioners on the Mediterranean.

Mixed backgrounds

The second revealing element about this collection of people – not designed to be representative in any way - was that most of them had previously lived or studied in another country other than their place of birth or nationality. They had moved as children, students or young adults, taken by their parents or of their own accord to gain life and work experience. Often they had a mixed heritage or a mixed marriage. The modalities and patterns of these experiences would be material to explore in a separate study of how multinational the younger European generations have become.

They are individuals whose trajectories have involved several experiences of border crossing out of personal choice ('I like moving', said one). They display a certain international outlook, which is not directly associated to their labour market status. For instance within the discussion group from a capital city (Warsaw), we find seven of 10 participant had links with three countries instead of two.

[A, Swedish woman] I am from **Sweden**, from the beginning, I came to **Warsaw** in February, from **Brussels**, where I lived latest, and I work here for a civil society organisation, an American trust ...

[E, woman] ... I am from **Finland**, I have been in Poland about four years, but I came first time nine years ago, first time, and I didn't [stay] in **Warsaw**, but I lived in **Koszalin** [...] I was then 18 and I went to Polish high school. [*After returning to Finland she came back*] I spent one year at the [*Polish*] University and met my husband. He is actually **English**, but he was working here. And then we moved for a while to **England** and then back again...

[F, Spanish, man]... I am from **Spain**, from Barcelona, I moved to **Poland** five years ago, exactly five years ago, after I had only five years also in **Germany**, where I finished my studies, and I am married with a Polish woman, I started studying in Poland the first year, a Master, in English, at the Politecnica and then I have worked for the last four years...

[J, British, woman] ... I am from **England**. I have been in **Warsaw** for three years and I [*was/lived/stayed*] in **Holland** for seven years and I prefer Warsaw also to Holland...

[RE, British-Irish, woman] ... I am **English**, but my parents are both **Irish**, so a little [?] mixed background there, I moved here two years ago, em, just after I finished my degree, and did a **Polish** course for a month and then just decided to stay. I was supposed to be on my way back to **Moscow** where I lived for a year, but I didn't quite make it, ...

[S, mixed UK/Fr, woman]: **Warsaw** is definitely a great place. I am half **British**, half **French**, my mother being French, my father British, and they moved around a lot, which, I suppose is why I like moving. Well, I haven't moved from here for seven years....

Another had moved to Warsaw not for work but to go back - to his heritage:

[D, man] ... I was born in **Sweden**, and I lived there for 18 years, then I moved to **Poland** to maybe find my roots, because my parents were originally from Poland.

The point of assembling these discussion groups was also to see how newcomers from another country, who have been given rights from 'above' (by international agreement) – find their way to using them, or miss them when they can't access them. While metaphors of journeys are appropriate for discussing free movers, channels and pathways suggest firm courses for action, or forward action along a firm course; while trails may be faint but they tend to be the only way to a known destination, trodden by others. After the fieldwork, stepping-stones seemed to better reflect a disconnectedness between the granting of right and its deployment, the absence of another right and the potential effect of that absence - which might nonetheless become linked up by various choices of 'stones' to step on. It helps to convey the notion of a lack of pattern or firm forward march, a certain randomness of moments in which people can approach political participation.

Starting out as outsiders

Politics texts on political socialisation tend to view a person's trajectory towards political participation as starting within a family and a community in a specific country, with a certain grooming going on as the child grows up and enters the public world around her/him (notwithstanding a few prominent exceptions such as Che Guevara or Stokeley Carmichael). For ordinary citizens, moving to a new country, even within Europe, can be experienced as a rupture that creates the positions of outsiders and insiders. A transition between the two is expected. But what emerged in these discussions was how long the outsider status could last. The passing from one to the other was not clear, hence the use of stepping stones, which allows one to be stuck on one stone without completely reaching the other side. In addition the position of

outsider turned out to affect people's sense of agency around political participation and voting.

When free movers discussed their arrival in another EU country, the term 'outsider' was used.

E, Finnish woman, Warsaw: I just still feel like I am a little bit outsider ...

Some free movers see themselves as in an outsider position at the *beginning* of their stay, to the extent that it even a contact with political events does not reach them. For instance this participant reported:

RE, British/Irish woman, Warsaw: I met the mayor of Warsaw once and that's through work. And it wasn't- I didn't have any issues I wanted to raise with her or anything [#00:37:37-5#] [...] she was elected about six months after I moved here and that was quite high profile, that election campaign, her face was all over the town, so #00:37:56-3#

[*MT prompts to see whether this helped her to feel included*]

RE: em, she seems very nice [LAUGHTER] em, yeah, it was- I mean, there really was just so little to do with me expressing my rights [...] all I can say is I met her and say that that was it. #00:38:23-4#

MT: and might it have made you- I mean- would you register to vote, as a result? in the local elections [...] #00:38:32-3#

RE: I have never looked into it. #00:38:33-9#

But another in Barcelona, S, who had been there for 14 years, said she felt every outside the political world of Catalonia, "which is a pity, because now I'm more interested in it than I have been for along time" (S, translated, Barcelona FM group #00:14:57-4#). This shows that despite time spent in the country, speaking the language and being interested, the Catalonia-Spain split left her unable to take sides. Here we see someone forced in to a limbo or to 'sit on the fence' because the political passions of her country of residence do not fully make sense to her.

At the other end, another Barcelona participant declared: [K]: "I'll always be a foreigner here, always, always" #00:23:30-4# "I am Italian, I speak Catalan, I'm always a foreigner " #00:23:36-6# (translated from Spanish by author). And given that her job required constant travelling, she felt she was living 'in parallel', and didn't mind whether she was living in Spain or in an independent Catalonia, though her local friends did.

The outsider status also allows for a positioning of **detachment from the politics of the country**:

E: I just still feel like I am a little bit outsider and always when something happened in Polish politics I'd rather just, you know, roll my eyes and talk with other expats how crazy the Poles are, nothing to do with me, really. That's the fun ... #00:39:26-9#

But several Warsaw participants posed that **time** has to elapse before the issue of political engagement could become salient in their lives.

RE: Maybe if perhaps if I stayed here longer, I think I am still kind of in that phase where I am thinking relatively short-term #00:38:40-1#

MT: ... it might take time before one actually gets to think about elections, settling down time or something? #00:38:51-7#

The level/tier of political decisionmaking at which to relate to the political system:

A (Belgian man, Warsaw): [...] you kind of come in from the top, you start by learning the president's name, you know; where you could actually maybe have a vote, at the local level it's - I am sure it's gonna take me a long time to go down there, it would be [*easier*] to say the MEPs, for example, the European[s]. Those guys I could probably mention or I would know...#00:40:01-4#

[...] yeah, maybe also because I come from Brussels. (Warsaw FM group, #00:40:05-6#

European politics is still something that I think is very valid for all of us, while the local Polish politics without the language is very hard to dig so deep. #00:40:21-2#

This participant explains his understanding of the European idea as relating to his Belgian background, but also poses that *local* politics (the only one allowed in EU suffrage law) is a level at which it is more difficult to engage. This counters some other statements, such as by a free-moving woman in London who found municipal politics was easier to access, but this was if you are a parent, like her, through contact with educational and medical services.

Local or national government as site for feeling included, or becoming an insider?

As to feeling included, some participants took it as equivalent to being generally satisfied with local government in terms of how the city was run, for instance Barcelona. S, an Italian woman resident for 4 years declared:

"This isn't a city where things are left undone. I get the impression there is a lot of action, that is, the problem gets solved. And there are improvements. They are

renovating the neighbourhoods, they set up the public bicycles, they do a lot" (translated, S, Barcelona FMs Tape 2 #00:05:52-8#).

And S stated she felt represented by the Zapatero government for their position on the policies that interested her, the social questions, gay marriage, 50% women ministers. So on the one hand she felt represented as a citizen of Barcelona owing to its efficiency and on the other hand, she felt more represented by the government due to the political orientation of its policies - which she couldn't vote for.

For KN (German woman, Barcelona, on the other hand, the municipal level meant little; even back in Germany she had voted only for the government, not in local elections.

Europe

However, in Poland no political identification with any Polish government was expressed, but various voices saw the **European level as inclusive**, with the potential of making people feel part of the democratic process, without being strong enough to actually create a sense of being represented:

A: the European level is there, makes you feel that you are - even though you don't know your local politicians, you are at least part of a democratic process. I will still vote in the European parliament [...] so it makes you feel, make me feel, that it's so to say overbuilt a little bit all over our democracy #00:40:58-8#

M: but not exactly to make you feel represented, nothing as strong as that? #00:41:02-3#

A: no, no #00:41:04-8#
[there] is kind of this notion of being European and that there is European [...?], but not represented, and I would also not fight for my rights through a Polish [body] #00:41:17-9#

Finding politics impenetrable

Another barrier to participation is the perceived complexity and speed of political change in the country of residence, and simply not understanding what is going on. An Italian woman 'S', after 4 years of residence in Barcelona, said; (translated)

"Well, here I am a bit confused at the moment because on top of it there is the Catalan question, - the autonomous societies, there is the national question and I still don't know where I stand"

...and another participant agreed. Then S added:

"I don't manage, I don't feel represented and I don't manage to indentify with any current at the moment – I don't know about you ..." #00:13:25-2#

In Poland, D, active in Sweden as a teenager, had lived through many changes while a student in Poland, but ended up feeling impotent:

D: ... everything is changing very fast here in politics [...] people were very engaged in the politics and talked about it all the time and you almost felt [...] there is too much politics [...]. Then the government changed and people got bored with it ... - but all the time I have been feeling that I can't do anything to change. I talk to people and say my opinion, but I can't vote, I can't do anything. #00:43:03-3#

So even a young person who has been engaged in political debate for along time both in their own country and in their country of residence can feels impotent - as it turns out - because they never found out that they could vote locally. Ignorance of this political right can be quite widespread as shown by these responses:

E: sorry, so we could actually vote in Poland? #00:43:26-8#

D: but for how long has that been? #00:43:55-3#

A: and from day one actually? You don't have to be here for like three years or ...? #00:44:08-3#

Finally, the **language** was a problem for engagement or a desire to vote. In Warsaw, the Polish language is then seen as a greater barrier for political participation than for labour market participation. The problem of having to operate in Polish is mentioned several times. Those in Barcelona face the same or greater language difficulties, as they mostly arrived with some Spanish and then were faced with spoken Catalan. Any foreigner or even a Spaniard who does not speak Catalan can't do just any job, because Catalan is demanded, it was alleged. But some leant quickly to understand it and could get by with answering back in Spanish (eg. MN, a French woman, in the Barcelona group discussion)

But the problem for freemovers transferring their sense of agency to the new country starts with **lack of information** and oral communication difficulties, for instance in Poland:

MT: when you say you are complaining, you mean you don't do anything about it because you don't know how?

R: yeah

MT: you don't know what channel

R: of course-

MT: because you are in Poland as opposed to in Spain, would you know what to do? #00:47:33-0#

R: of course, yeah. [...] and yeah, language here is a big problem, yeah, for foreigners [...]. Yeah, we do not know how to - you have to investigate if you want to know how to complain about something #00:47:51-1#

Voting in your country of nationality

By contrast, participants had registered with their respective consulates in Poland and this had led to them becoming aware of their ability to vote from abroad. This postal vote allowed them to vote in two countries, the parliamentary or presidential elections back home and the municipality locally. This possibility was open to them because they received election cards from their Embassy or directly from eg 'the Swedish government'. But asked whether that made them feel politically represented, some felt it was 'not enough'.

For MN, a French woman in Barcelona, remembered being told that to vote for the European Election she had to go back to France, and felt strongly that for the EP, one should be able to vote in any place in Europe #00:28:40-6# (though of course she could have). Another Barcelona participant, was indignant at the idea of having to go back to France:

SE, French woman, Barcelona: "If I live here, it must be here that I can vote, I pay my taxes here". #00:29:03-3#

Some free movers are involved in politics in their former country of residence, and bring that with them, but do not translate it into active agency in the new country's politics. Instead it keeps them looking to political developments outside of their country of country of residence and they keep voting back home through a power of attorney. For MO, a French banker in London, involved in French politics, his father holds it and votes on his behalf. In fact he did move back to France. So free movement, when it is free and easy, can help movers gain experience in another country, keep links with 'home' and later did move back to a better job (personal communication). Career ambition and success can dis-incentivise a free mover from participating in the 'stepping-stone' country.

There is however, a limit on the chances of staying in touch with the previous country:

E, Polish woman, 9 yrs in London:

I think as Polish, I should have- er, you know, it doesn't matter how long I have been living abroad, I should always have a right to vote for president or for parliament, because that's the people who represent my country. I don't think I should have a right to vote in like council or probably the smallest level, like in

county elections, because I have nothing to do with them anymore ... (FMs, London #00:31:02-0#)

E then confirms her view that the vote should be for the government in Poland and the local council only in the UK and not in Poland. She is then challenged:

A, Romanian woman, London: I mean why does that affect your voting in Poland for the president or for the parliament or for the government #00:31:29-1# [...]

E: well, it doesn't affect me, but it affects people who live in Poland. #00:31:31-2#

A: then why do you vote? #00:31:31-4#

E: well, because my parents have such a view and I do read Polish press #00:31:36-0#

A: no, forget about your parents #00:31:36-7#

E: but I do- I still follow Polish press and I- I had the view that- you know, that certainly wasn't right for my country and I do have the right to say no or say yes, so, yes, I am still Polish and I will never ever, actually, you know, even if I am planning to ... #00:31:58-5#

But A then retorts, referring to her right to vote in Poland:

A: em, I didn't go to vote when we were supposed to go vote for- I think it was for the government. I don't live there anymore, I don't care. (FMs, London #00:32:31-5#)

V comes in, agreeing with E that voting back home is a right to be held on to, and regarding elections coming up in her region (Sardinia) she feels:

V, Italian woman, London: ... and er, I might go, I mean, I think I have to go, because it's still my country ... #00:33:30-8#

Then another adds she also wants to keep her vote in Slovakia:

LC, Slovak woman, London: I agree with E. I don't want to say I don't care, but, I am living here, but I am still- it's the nationality. #00:34:42-8#

This desire is grounded in values, not just opportunities, as there is a hesitation about voting in the UK:

V: and anyway, I am here just three months, so it's not enough time to vote here anyway, it wouldn't be right for me to vote here now, maybe after three years or something like that #00:34:24-9#

V, Italian woman: points to her own period of three years before casting any voting in the UK, as a matter of principle, which again substantiates the notion of possibly a 'transition', in terms of time. But given the desire of both A and E to continue to vote for the government in their country of nationality for an indefinite number of years, they are intent on keeping one foot in both countries. This dual allegiance is slightly different from the transition concept and in-between positioning, as it suggests permanence, and therefore touches on questions of personal identity

The in-between

A participant described the 'in-between' positioning thus:

L, Italian woman with 5 yrs residence in London: "and you know when you move to another country, there is a sort of in-between, because actually you don't live anymore in a country, so I don't think it's right to be represented - no, it's right that- what I mean is, [I'm] happy to vote, for example for a may- for the mayor of London, because I am living here, maybe even superficially I can judge the London life if the things work and so on. So I'd be happy to vote for it and I think it's right if you are living here, you pay tax here and so on, it's right to vote and to have the right to vote. But if you are not living in a country [*MT: ie Italy*], you don't pay the tax in a country, you don't use actually the service in a country, you are not working in the country, I don't know if politics can represent you or if you tried that the polity represents you, because your life is in another country. But now it's not enough time I have been living here to be completely represented from the British government. [...] But because I am living here, I don't want to have my head in Italy and live here. (London FMs #00:28:21-8#)

Several points emerge from these views. There is an in-between position that is not insubstantial, as it holds strong yet mixed feelings and it can last a good few years, 5 in her case. Voting where you pay taxes is right. The previous country can no longer represent you. But 5 yrs is not enough for feeling represented by the British government. That is why she has stated 2 minutes earlier: "I don't feel represented from anybody here" (L, London FMs #00:27:04-2#)

Another way the in-between position becomes substantiated is when free movers gets to the stage where they would like to tackle a local problem where they are living but finds

themselves feeling mobilised, yet blocked, and falling into a 'negative position' which is also passive:

R, Spanish woman, Warsaw: ... [*Being able to vote back home*] it's not enough. Because for example if, em, we are living here, we know how every day the city is working, you know, we have some complaints or, you know, things we think we can say, just to have a little [*improvement*] but we are actually not- I don't know [*about*] the rest [*of you*], but for me I am not just trying to find a way [*through*], so I am passive at this point. I am complaining, but then I do not [*do*] anything. So it's like, you know, negative position. But I don't even know if there is any - you know, like, point for foreigners like [*for*] trying to help or just to complain, or just to be listened [*to*] and say what they want to say. (Warsaw FMs #00:47:17-5#)

Avoiding political involvements

Given the obstacles, other participants eschewed the need to achieve any sort of political representation. In Warsaw, F, a Spanish man, reported trying to talk politics when living in Germany but 'the system rejected me as a foreigner' (Warsaw FMs #00:58:21-3#). Then he approached some political party people once in Poland to share his views, but felt something, not exactly rejection as a foreigner, because being a European, that was ok ('European is nice')

F, Spanish, man: 'but you are not a Pole, you are not Polish, and you have to respect [*it/that*] (FMs, Warsaw #00:58:21-3#).

Finally, he decided he would not look for representation from anywhere, but take up a new position:

F: So the thing is just that I am going - or I would like to go in the contrary direction, not looking for representatives anywhere I go, but I mean learning from experience everywhere #00:58:33-6#

D, Swedish/Polish, man: be more local #00:58:36-2#

F: or even more local, more practical, but not – I don't miss any political representative in the countries ... #00:58:44-6#

F: it's a little bit anarchist approach [LAUGHTER] but I mean [...] – why not? We are the future and maybe it would be one approach, I mean, instead of looking for [*representation*] #00:58:56-4# ...I could be voting here, but it's not about voting. Probably what you look is just to integrate yourself or share your views, but there is a rejection #01:00:20-4#

The man who proposed to make something out of the outsider position, F, is married to a Polish woman and declared:

F: I can say I am very happy in Poland, I feel like in Spain - it's difficult to believe, but #00:22:58-7#

This passage also shows that there are in fact *missing stepping stones* to a free-mover voting and feeling represented, because at first there is the question that if one wants to participate in a another country's politics, one has to firstly feel comfortable expressing one's views, confident of understanding the political situation, competent at expressing oneself in the foreign language, all of which would require time and determination.

Furthermore, there is the question of how receptive the receiving population is to the political views of newcomers.

A, Swedish woman, Warsaw: but I am thinking also that it's also a little bit about the culture where you come into, I have been in the Belgian [*culture*] latest, and here- and in Belgium I know I could vote for local elections and I didn't, and it's also maybe because of my own stereotypes about the Belgium bureaucracy and administration and kind of- I felt so disfunctional when you had to line [*queue*] for a free registration pass for six hours and stuff like that, so you feel that gosh, if they can't even get the lining [*queuing*] system going, I am sure if I go and say 'can you please listen to my political opinions' it wouldn't be- and I can get a little bit - here I haven't tried so much - but I get the sense from a lot of people around that there is not so much trust in politicians, there is a lot of scandals, there is a lot of corruption, and when people signalise that - or this is the general viewpoint I get from many other people - it- I think that also maybe prevents you from trying to impose your right. People just think I am a stupid Swede coming here [LAUGHTER] I don't know, but I think that, er, that in general the signals you get are not really that ... (FMs, Warsaw #01:04:03-6#)

The 'critical newcomer' positioning of freemovers is also of interest in the way that, instead of being a stepping-stone (or driver) towards practicing citizenship, it discomforts or even antagonises the locals, as if only insiders/nationals can criticise their country. How far this varies by member-state – such as between those who stereotypically feel superior or inferior to others - and whether it is a matter of national political culture or merely pertains to certain nationalistic sub-cultures, would be a matter for research for it gives a different slant to the development of a European citizenship and to migrant politics.

Feelings of rejection and links with voting

E, a Czech woman who had lived for 10 yrs in Barcelona and worked for Italian company, did not use her vote because she did not feel represented, as she thinks the politicians in Spain say one thing and do another: they promise a lot and then don't keep their word. She saw too many gaps/failings in politics, such as over social protection, for instance, of foreigners. She had keenly felt the shock of arrival without speaking Catalan, without papers printed in Catalan. There was 'so much rejection'.

More recently, working for an Italian company and living with a non-Catalan person she still felt ambivalence about the country ("on the one hand I like it, on the other I don't") and saw "failings that are too big that I didn't see before" (E., Barcelona FMs, translated, Tape 2 #00:21:53-2 - #00:23:11-8# #). No politician made her feel represented - but she was glad to have the vote anyway.

In this discourse, use of the vote is declined because the country has not been welcoming enough to the non-nationals it is committed to take in - as if Czech E felt voting were giving something away without having received enough. Another participant responded to E, insisting on the need to buckle down and learn Catalan, however hard it was, because it was the key to acceptance; she herself had been determined and succeeded. That way, she claimed, she had felt no rejection.

Nonetheless the issue of feeling rejected were voiced in Barcelona and Poland and London, though only once in the latter.

E, Polish woman, London: er, it's hard to feel, you know, at home here, when we are being constantly singled out in newspapers [...] ...but er- it's hard to feel represented when there is that sort of view in newspapers. (FMs London, #00:29:16-8#)

Nonetheless, E had voted in Brent and at the Polish general election via the Embassy. But the wider issue of the way feeling 'not at home' can be an inhibiting factor, not just for voting but for the general practice of citizenship in everyday life.

Leaving but not arriving

In addition to practical difficulties and (fear of) rejection, the discussion groups revealed there is a sense of disconnection with possibilities for political participation or for seeking representation as a way to redressing a problem, which arises from having left somewhere, without exactly having arrived somewhere else.

J, English woman, Warsaw: I have sort of left England behind a bit, because I haven't been there for ten years, so I sort of feel a bit disconnected and I haven't voted there, because I feel ... ten years, you know, I don't really, well, I do have a right to vote, but I feel that ... sense of selfishness that it's things that affect other people. (Poland FMs #01:02:09-0#)

RE, British/Irish woman, Warsaw: I also think, going back to representation, think that, em, when I was living in the country where I was from then I felt I had much more invested in it, and so if something did annoy me, you know, very strongly, I'd be much more willing to do something about it. If I got to that level in Poland, I'd just move. #01:02:47-4#

Instead of going through the hoops, the freemover with mobile skills can just leave, particularly if the person has no partner or children to consider. But despite freemovers' rights and protection from discrimination, in the practise of an everyday political citizenship, they are either positioned or position themselves as eternal foreigners.

Gaining agency via information and a focal point

The free-movers articulate the lack of a sense of agency they feel, resulting from internal inhibition brought on by the lack of a facilitating environment. Despite confessing to passivity, R suggests a **focal point** for 2nd-country nationals. While one could argue that this need could be met by a simple website run by and for expats, another participant explained that discussing one's concerns with various less recent newcomers ended up being confusing and an single information point would be 'a really big help' #00:48:15-2# In the ensuing discussion, the national consulates were not perceived as an information point about Poland, but later, the Embassies were, if they had a special person appointed. The French system of having representatives for overseas residents didn't fit the bill either (as these 27 *députés* elected in French overseas territories for the purpose of taking part in parliamentary debates in France - see Equy 2012). The participants also did not feel like 'expatriates' (equated with people sent by companies, who moved from country to country) seen as retaining close connection to their home country.

Even before considering their political representation, the issue of lack of practical know-how for getting settled in the new country loomed large:

E, Finnish woman, Warsaw: ... it would be a good idea someone you could contact if you have any problem. Someone who would understand and would ... straight away organise to get [?] all furnished, just walk in and you can organise ... everything [...]. Normally if you go to a Polish office they don't speak any English there. No one speaks English and then you are supposed to get all this [official?] things done, papers filled in Polish ... #00:52:03-4#

Regarding access to information, another Warsaw resident added

J, British woman, Warsaw: it's all sort of hearsay, so if there were a contact that spoke English that could certainly give you information on rights that would be really useful. (Warsaw FM #01:01:29-0#)

This contact person who might be in each Embassy, or might, as another suggested, not be a national but could be one person, an English speaker to whom the free-movers could be sent to if they had difficulties with, say, the Polish tax office,

S, British/French woman, Warsaw: then at least you would have a stepping-stone into the sort of Polish system. (Warsaw FM #00:56:12-0#)

And, as J added:

J, British woman, Warsaw: I think not just the language is a barrier, but there seems to be an overwhelming amount of bureaucracy. Coming from Holland, it was so much more straightforward to deal with all of those things, perhaps because they spoke English, perhaps. (Warsaw FM #01:01:29-0#)

For her part, KN, a German woman in Barcelona, felt that there was insufficient support for EU freemovers who wanted to set up a small business, for the funds were set aside to aid foreign women. (Warsaw FM Tape 2 #00:15:36-7#)

These remarks, part of a series of quite forcefully expressed responses to the issue of representation, show that newcomers think of their representation in various ways, for instance, in terms of recognition for their situation as foreigners who have not yet found their way around the administrative system. Before these needs are met, there can be little by way of a symbolic transition over stepping stones from outsider to insider to participant statuses and taking up political positionings in local or national affairs, even though legally they would be able to vote within weeks of arrival if they registered for a forthcoming local election – certainly in the UK, though with variations by country – see Shaw 2007:147-153). **Therefore the discussion about rights needs to take account of other factor besides rights, which give clues as to why rights are not taken up. These conversations revealed a vast terrain between arrival and voting, littered with practical obstacles, affective constraints, feeling of being unwelcome and last but not least the advanced question of how to decide who to vote for once all the other obstacles have been overcome.**

Getting on the Electoral Register

Significantly, the procedure for taking the significant step of discovering how to vote did not come up in the discussions in Barcelona and Warsaw, whereas in London, 'the letter from the Council' became a lively talking point. This is also an indicator of the importance of both institutional outreach and of *newcomer know-how* to avoid the pitfalls of lack of information and help points. Getting to the polling booth can be heavily dependent on getting hold of 'the letter'.

MT: what prevents you from voting at the council elections, since you have the right? Why don't you? #00:39:47-3#

LA, Romanian woman, London: because they don't send me a letter, something like that [*a letter*], because...#00:39:50-9#

But even when a London Council had been assiduous at sending out a form to update the Electoral Register, it is not addressed to newcomers personally. LA, in the light of the privacy of the post, would not consider opening it (LA, Romanian woman, London

(#00:39:58-9#). In the Warsaw and Barcelona groups, the question of how to get on to a register was of little concern or interest, perhaps because, in the case of Spain at least, the electoral register is drawn up on the basis of a separate town council residence register. But in London any new resident has to take an initiative to register and if they do not see an invitation to do so, many do not catch on to the possibility. For instance 4 out of the London group of 7 had 'no idea'. Though councils do send one form to each known residence, but with people renting different rooms and makeshift flats and no one taking responsibility for filling in the single form for all the inhabitants, the chances of falling through the net are considerable. Of course there are many ways to register, but this only becomes obvious only once a newcomer has set eyes on 'the letter'.

Another point that emerged in the London group was that it was difficult to know who the Councillors were. Until just before an election, no leaflet came through the door. People have to discover that there is such a thing as a 'surgery' with 'their' councillor(s) for 'their' ward in the 'borough' – and the words and their pronunciation have to be learnt. Newcomers have to search the borough's website to find out who this person(s) is. Not every one of knows what borough they live in. And even then, the concept of the single person responsible for an area (as opposed to local political party offices) is not well known. So this raises the question of the incentive to vote at local elections if people have not had any contact with a councillor or experienced a local problem that had been solved in a satisfactory way by someone (other than a council official) whose face and name can be recognised or associated with a party in order to make a choice when an election comes round.

The only local experience that any freemover could mention was the opening of a new library in Barnet, which she, R, attended, briefly meeting Theresa Villiers there. R is a 40 year old Portuguese-Angolan woman, a long-term resident, a hairdresser married to a British man, with two children. On the topic of feeling politically represented, she commented:

R, Portuguese Angolan woman, London: well, I could say - I mean I am very much into- I don't consider myself British, I am not British, but I am here, I am pretty in touch, or I re-rooted here, so, yeah, I always say I- I presume, yeah, I am represented, by my councilor, I suppose (London FMs #00:26:25-2#)

Furthermore, elections for European Parliament also appear remote:

MO, French, man, London: ...I've got the feeling that you've got the choice to vote either in your country, original country, or to vote in the UK, and maybe there might be a bit of complexity to make sure that you don't vote twice [FMs 3Gr, Part 1, #00:14:48-1#]

MA, Swedish woman, London: I have never been asked to do that in thirteen years that I have been here [FMs 3FGr, Part 1 #00:14:59-6#]

The question should be raised of what kind of citizenship is actually offered to freemovers as residents of an area or at the local government level. Arguably it is weak, inaccessible, of unclear purpose. It lacks a face until a person has been resident for quite a time, has found a way in, perhaps via marriage or a steady job with good colleagues, or local contacts such as via schools. For her part, R has obtained a degree of ease and feelings of being represented in her country of residence through a personal process of integration, long residence, and forming a family. It would be interesting to know if the rights of freemovers helped her at all at the *start* of her trajectory.

Agency lost and not re-gained during the move

The notion of 'in-betweeners' suggests that the free-mover, by leaving their countries voluntarily, leave behind their former sense of agency but do not simply redeem it on arriving elsewhere. Unlike their passport, their sense of agency is not valid anywhere in the EU. A limbo or in-between citizenship position is created which is not mainly of their own volition, but due to the fact that leaving a socio-political system is so much easier than entering a new one. There is a loss of affect ('selfishness that it's things that affect other people') and of 'investment', which cannot simply transfer.

Then there is also the phenomenon that being in the position of a free-to-move EU citizen can encourage further movement: if the new country does not please, it is even easier to leave than the previous one, thus undermining potential political interest and participation on arrival anywhere: even if they need representation ('if something did annoy me very strongly') they would not seek it. Though this phenomenon would need further investigation, it contains a **potential paradox: the EU citizenship project contributes to uprooting and loss of affective citizenship or rootlessness.**

When a different form of representation was discussed, namely the possibility of having one member of every national parliament elected by the resident 2nd country EU nationals, as a way of helping them to feel represented in national affairs, it proved of interest even though it was not immediately clear how it might function.¹ One Warsaw participant agreed because she wanted a solution to the varying member-state quarantine laws for pets, which obstructed her border crossings in a various ways. Experiencing difficulties over a number of years, she had found no channel of redress and so embraced the idea of an EU residents' representative in each country.² In effect hers was a claim for greater integration in an insufficiently harmonised regulatory environment, which would help her feel at home and gain citizenship as a pet-lover.

The individual whose free movement is obstructed through the lack of a good fit between member-state procedures and practices is apparently left unprotected, with the complaints system focused on lack of compliance with EU law rather than a lack of laws to harmonise practices (see European Commission, Application of EU law website, 2012). As she put it:

S, British/Irish woman, Warsaw: yeah, because [...] you know otherwise you have to sort of petition and argue for years because you can't access and you have to write to the EU government and complain about the law in the UK. Whereas having a direct access in the country, that would be fabulous. (Warsaw FMs #01:52:46-2#)

So even if the new EU residents, as in Warsaw, did not seem particularly keen to vote nor to have an MP as a representative, they did have policy concerns (such as over excess bureaucracy, cars speeding and lack of speed limits, traffic lights, accidents involving children, travelling with pets) and wished to exercise a certain agency as citizens, to perform acts that would improve the situation. For instance, one felt the urge to do 'charitable things' to get the rubbish in a beautiful public park cleared, but was reluctant to 'tangle' with Polish bureaucracy. Yet:

S, British/French, woman: ...whereas if there was an EU representative - not necessarily of foreigners, you know, other EU members in Poland, but just an EU representative within the Polish government, maybe I would, you know, I'd find it more accessible. (Warsaw FMs #01:55:46-0#)

While they were aware that they could go through the local level in Poland and that accessing the EU or EP might be possible, someone representing Europeans in each country sounded preferable.

Voting locally in one's country of residence

In Barcelona a few free-movers had voted in the local elections and had felt more 'implicated' as a result, with one clearly making the connection with the consequences:

L, Italian, woman, Barcelona: I believe its important [...] because otherwise we will complain of the abstention, or of the result, so if everybody went out to vote... One has to take responsibility... (Barcelona FMs, #00:19:29-4#)

Further reasons given for voting include that some of those elected at the bottom would then have a career and "will be those who represent us later, in various institutions" with the idea that large turnouts would contribute to getting better representatives and "perhaps this way we will manage to feel more represented...". (L, Barcelona FMs, translated, #00:19:29-4#). Seconds later L points out that

L, Italian woman, Barcelona: I believe that the fact of voting, whether you feel represented or not [...] Don't you know how easy it is? We can vote! So I'm going. [...] There have been people who have struggled and have died to get precisely this freedom and this right, no? Whether things then go well or not is not what [*bothers me*]" (FMs, Barcelona, translated #00:20:26-5#)

Finally, SE, a French woman, in Barcelona for 14 yrs, said she didn't vote out of duty but in order to keep out those she doesn't want to be there, in order not to lose all the help and social gains, which she fears will be lost (SE, FMs #00:21:22-0#). However, this is precisely what she cannot do in her country of residence. Thus those non-nationals of a country who do vote are giving the same sort of reasons as nationals would. The tone of the interventions here reveal quite strong opinions around politics and reveal nothing of their de facto exclusion from electing the national government of the day. Neither of these participants were recent arrivals.

Yet when it came to the end-of-discussion written exercise in the focus groups, in which participants chose features of the political system that would embody their ideal representative, *none* of the ten members of the Warsaw group chose the option that their ideal would be a local councillor among their 8 top preferred features. Two included an MEP, 3 a regional representative and 5 a national representative/deputy. The eight members of the Barcelona group spread themselves evenly across the 4 levels (while not ranking any of them highly), meaning in effect that half of them would feel represented in two tiers of lawmaking for which they have no right to vote, since Spanish nationality remains a requirement for regional assemblies as well as parliament. Both thereby expressed a degree of actual and subjective disenfranchisement.³ But the UK group, by then more aware of their actual rights, given the tenor of the preceding discussion, did prefer a representative from *local* government to any other legislative tier, but the while issue of the tier in which their ideal representatives was to operate was not very important for them (in comparison with other desirable features of the representation system including the characteristics of the representatives themselves).

As to the issue of having a right to vote for the parliament of one's country of residence, this was welcomed as a possibility. Asked which vote (residence or nationality) was more important, the voter-participants in the Barcelona group said it was more important to vote in the country you work/live in.

KN, German woman, 4 years in Barcelona: I want a future in the country I am living in, and that is why I am more interested in voting for a government, there where I am (FMs Barcelona Tape 2: #00:27:37-5#)

S, Italian woman, Barcelona: Where you pay your taxes, where you make contributions, because we are accepted by all the laws of the country there, while on the contrary, the laws of our country of origin don't affect us anymore (#00:28:00-4#)

L, Italian woman, Barcelona: Maybe I'll go and live in Italy and I don't want to vote in Spain anymore, I want to vote in Italy, well [*I want*] the option of making that change. Or to Germany or wherever... (FMs Barcelona tape 2 #00:29:07-5#)

If the option entailed a loss of voting rights in the country of nationality this was not something they objected to (contrary to some participants in London), accepting that double voting had to be avoided. But this was as long as did not lose their nationality, passport or pension from their original country.

Preliminary Conclusion

Davide Pero` and John Solomos (2010) concluded their introduction by indicating some questions for future research on migrants' mobilization arising from the articles a/chapters in their edited works, which were "without claims of exhaustiveness": questions of affects and emotions of migrants, the role played by attachments and feelings in migrants' collective action. These group discussions were part of a wider study that did precisely that. It investigated how citizens and non-citizens felt about their political representation and how they visualized ideal representatives who would help them feel represented. It held four group discussions with Muslim women and four with racialised minorities in Spain, UK, Poland and Macedonia, one group of foreigners in Macedonia and three with EU free-movers, in addition to eight groups with local men and women – four each. The study did not seek to explore mobilization but political citizenship, understood in its wider sense of subjective views and preferences of citizens.

In particular, given the limited voting rights of intra-EU movers, little time was spent on discussing the workings of the representation system for citizens nor on the parties while allowing participants' concerns to emerge. One key assumption was that the lack of a vote in national elections would be a clear frustration – hence the title of the paper. But after re-reading the transcriptions yet again with a close ear for their particular experiences, the wealth of other considerations emerged more strongly. The dimension of the vote shrunk in size. It no longer became a given – you have the right to vote in this and this election, so you must have done something with it - but the end point of a process. The dimension that loomed larger and larger was the particular individual experiences of taking advantage for personal reasons of the EU citizenship right to settle anywhere, particular their difficulties. The experiences of outsidership, limbo, in-betweenness, inclusion, rejection, incomprehension, bureaucratic hurdles, lack of know-how, no one to turn to, constitute a swamp to be navigated by finding stepping stones here and there in no particular order. This challenges the notion of EU citizenship as something fixed and given, as it is never publicly presented as a collective struggle or a personal ordeal. True, none of these narratives are representative of the whole population of free movers, though they may be commonly found in the wider foreign migrant experience. The point is that they are not what it says on the political package's label.

As to the paper's initial question of whether it 'hurts' to be taxed without being allowed to elect the government, the answer is that a few other aspects of the free movement experience hurt more. But there was little doubt about the principle, and no one denied

it. But it was not the taxation that the free-movers minded, it was the concomitant potential loss of their former political rights and their shifting feelings of allegiance to one or other country that occupied them just as much. In sum one could say that within the context of the push for European citizenship, sitting on the fence between countries ought to be recognised as a dignified position and made more comfortable.

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¹ This was born of a discussion within a group not reported on here, and the author /moderator developed it and added it to the subsequent moderator's topic guide.

² Though this sounded like a matter for the European Ombudsman, this body 'investigates complaints about maladministration in the institutions and bodies of the European Union', not by member-states (European Ombudsman 2012, accessed 5 October).

³ The fact that regional Assemblies now often allow EU citizens to vote is an issue for future research because of their relatively recent establishment in the UK and Poland.