



DEFINING MIGRATION POLICIES FROM ORIGIN COUNTRY PERSPECTIVE¹

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Abstract: *The role state plays in international migration gathers more and more attention in migration studies, across different disciplines. Policies implemented in order to manage migration are a point of high interest in the space of destination countries. Yet, even though our knowledge from destination perspective has constantly increased, origin state is still under the shadow of a biased research agenda. We have little insights on the way migration policies at origin are built, enforced or on their effects on international movements. This paper addresses the gap, proposing a definition and a subsequent operationalization of migration policies at origin. Building on the few papers approaching the issue (de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011; Weinar, 2014), it advocates for a general definition, encompassing three fields of intervention: emigration, diaspora and return. The endeavour is part of a larger effort directed to evaluate migration policies in the case of origin liberal democratic states, origin of international migration, using policy on paper approach.*

Keywords: *origin state, emigration, diaspora, return migration, migration policies*

Introduction

The role state plays in international migration has come back as high interest topic in the research related to the phenomenon by the end of the last century (Massey, 1999, Hollifield, 2008, Hollifield & Wong, 2013).

In 1997, in an article devoted to the immigration theory, Portes (1997: 812) was discussing a "sampler of themes" he considers relevant for the advance of the research and theory in the field of immigration studies. One of the fives was *the state and state-systems*. Portes was arguing that, even though "Detailed accounts of the process leading to major legislation (...) do exist, but they have not been transformed into a systematic theoretical analysis..." Portes (1997: 817)

¹ This paper is done under the aegis of the Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy as a part of programme co-funded by the European Union within the Operational Sectoral Programme for Human Resources Development through the project for Pluri and interdisciplinary in doctoral and post-doctoral programmes Project Code: POSDRU/159/1.5/S/141086

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Two years later, reviewing the literature about the role of the state in migration to date, Massey (1999: 303) was noting down the lack of attention the theories of international migration pays "... to the nation state as an agent influencing the volume and composition of international migration".

If, at the end of the millennium, the role of the state did not have the proper/desirable place in migration studies, there was also a big discrepancy between the attention assigned to the origin state and destination state. In the previously quoted article, Massey was writing: "To the extent that state policies have been mentioned at all, attention has focused primarily on immigrant-receiving countries. Little has been written about the regulation of emigration in countries of origin" (*ibidem*).

Fifteen years after Massey's paper publication, Weinar (2014:5) was writing: "While it seems obvious what immigration policy is, emigration policy represents an enigma." Letting apart the obvious exaggeration (Weinar starts her study reviewing the literature on the issue), the problem exists: we do not have a consistent knowledge and a consistent debate about the role of the origin state in international migration in the current literature.

And if different papers treat diverse facets of the interventions from origin in migration, there are only few systematically addressing the migration policy at origin, and fewer defining it or addressing the conceptual issues related to it. If in the case of destination state, defining migration policy, operationalizing it, quantifying and (newly) evaluating comparatively and on quantitative basis define a consistent current research stream (APSA, 2013), in the case of origin state similar efforts are pretty inexistent. Just recently, within the frame of some research projects (e.g. DEMIG, Oxford University), the interest for migration policies extended to incorporate the origin dimension.

The present paper, part of a larger endeavour to understand the way migration policies at origin are built, contributes to the current effort of filling the gap of knowledge about migration policy at origin by discussing the issue of defining and operationalizing it.

As the field of research is still "under construction", numerous terminological confusions are present in the literature. Terms as migration policies, emigration, and sometimes diaspora policies are used interchangeably, all referring part or the totality of origin state intervention in relation to emigration, to the own migrants (while abroad), return migration or the consequences of migration. Here I have opted for *migration policies at origin* as designating the totality of origin state interventions related to emigration, the own migrants (while abroad) and return migration.

The paper starts reasoning that, in historical perspective, there are consistent arguments to consider the origin state as an important player in international migration (Massey, 1999). The lack of attention paid to the issue in the current literature is probably (mainly) the result of two factors: one related to the fact that democratic origin states have limited power in controlling the exit/re-entry of own citizens and another one related to the "bias" of migration studies towards destination countries (de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011).

The next section of the paper maps and discusses conceptualizations of migration policies at origin (or of its different components) in the current literature.

Unfortunately, the lack of attention paid to define seems to be the rule and very few papers systematically approach the issue. Two definitions are kept (de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011 and Weinar, 2014) and used as a basis for developing the own, more general definition, and operationalize it, in the section four of the paper. The end part mainly discusses the possible ways of validating the definition and its subsequent operationalization.

The paper is built under the strong conviction that there is a need of documenting the process of policy evaluation and to clarify the concepts used (see also de Haas et al, 2014a, Czaika & de Haas, 2013 on this). "Conceptual confusion" seems to be, at the end, the reason of apparently contradictory views of the effects of immigration policies (Czaika & de Haas, 2011: 5). Defining as precisely as possible is, from this perspective, the first step to be taken in the effort to investigate migration policies at origin.

The role of origin state in international migration and research agenda in migration studies

As already stated, one may discuss about a lack of conceptualization in the case of origin state interventions in international migration. Yet, the simple fact of noticing *a lack* does not mean that *the subject of that specific lack* deserves (in scientific value) to be, as this paper does, investigated. The state of the art may reflect the marginality of one phenomenon (origin state intervention in international migration, in this case), consequently displayed by research agenda. If this is the case, an effort to understand migration policies at origin will be, in its turn, also marginal. In our opinion, this is not the case and the main argument is related to the pretty consistent literature documenting the origin state interventions in international migration.

If one looks in historical perspective, restrictions related to exit seems more present than we perceive them today. De Haas & Vezzoli (2011: 7) discuss about the tendency of mercantilist modern states of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries to value their population. This stance towards population as resource is maintained during the nation state building period (Mau et al., 2012), even though processes like industrialization and the growth of population changed the perspective on emigration as a population pressure relief (de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011; Castles & Miller, 2009). Talking about "exit revolution", Zolberg (2007) suggests a change, in the mid of nineteenth century, of the weight in controlling, from exit to entrance. Even under these conditions, the twentieth century was witnessing large forced movements of population generated by the origin states (Fassman & Munz, 1994, Castles & Miller, 2009). During the post World War II era, the communist states were drastically limiting the international freedom of movement for their citizens (Massey 1999). No longer than two and a half decades ago, the fall of these regimes and the subsequent lift of exit ban created a huge hysteria in the Western democratic world (Fassman & Munz, 1992).

If all these can be considered proofs of the consistent role origin states play in international migration, the tendency to associate them with totalitarian regimes of the past influenced the current perception of loss of power of origin state in regulating the flows of people (Weinar, 2014). Yet, systematic inquiries proves exit restrictions are not

entirely stories of the past: in 2005, McKenzie enumerates 17 countries imposing restrictions on women ability to obtain a passport and identifies countries requiring an exit visa or government permission to leave the country, as well as restrictions related to the achievement of compulsory national service.

Even though the function of regulating the exit consistently diminished in the contemporary world, an increasing number of origin countries have adopted policies to promote emigration, and (or) to encourage the migrants connections and investments at the origin (Massey, 1999, Agunias, 2006; Agunias & Newland, 2007; Gamlen 2006, 2008 etc.)

This image of origin countries involved in migration is confirmed by the view expressed by the governments. One of the UN World Population Policies longitudinal databases¹ offers an interesting view on this point. Working on it, de Haas & Vezzoli (2011), estimates that 27% of the governments responded in 2009 to the need of managing migration with policies, the most part of them (22%) taking actions to encourage migration, and only 5% to discourage it (p. 34). Contrary to the well spread view that emigration countries are only interested in raising their outflow of people (Gibson & McKenzie, 2011), de Haas & Vezzoli identifies a ascending trend of the views that emigration is "too high" (an increase from 13% to 30% in the number of countries surveyed) (p. 30)

This lack of conceptualization related to origin state intervention in international migration seems particularly odd under the consistent recent increase of interest for destination state interventions. The latest decades are witnessing a continuous raise in efforts to define, conceptualize, measure in quantitative and comparative manners the whole pack of policies associated with destination space (on an attempt to provide a synthetic view on the efforts related to defining immigration policies see APSA (2013)).

If there are arguments to suspect the origin state is a powerful player in international migration and the interest for conceptualizing the role of the state in migration (in general) is increasing, then the current state of the art becomes suspect to be mainly the result of a specific dynamic of research agenda in migration studies. Figure 1 displays possible interplays between facts and bias in research agenda. As some other authors suggest (see de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011), current situation can be assigned to the Case D, describing the research in the field as profoundly affected by the bias of migration studies towards receiving countries, approached in a Eurocentric perspective (p. 32)

¹ Details on UN World Population Policies Databases can be retrieved at http://esa.un.org/PopPolicy/about_database.aspx

Figure 1. Interplay between the role of the origin state in international migration and research agenda in migration studies

		Research agenda in migration studies	
		Non-biased research agenda	Biased research agenda
Role of the origin state in international migration	Marginal	No conceptualization on the role of origin state in migration <i>(case A)</i>	Conceptualization on the role of origin state in migration <i>(case B)</i>
	Important	Conceptualization on the role of the origin state in migration <i>(case C)</i>	No conceptualization on the role of origin state in migration <i>(case D)</i>

More than having a long history of intervention and currently contributing to the shaping of current flows, the origin state seems to have a consistent potential to increase its role in international migration in the future. At least two different sets of arguments may be invoked:

First, the current forms of migration seem to privilege the retention of migrant's links to the origin space (Portes et al, 1999). The double anchoring of a transnational life is stimulating the reciprocal interest of migrants and authorities in origin to be involved together in international migration.

Second, the current optimism, even moderate, related to the migration-development nexus (de Haas, 2010) creates serious incentives for the origin states to involve in relations with its migration generated diaspora and to find ways to extract the benefits of migration.

The role of the origin state in migration and migration policies at origin

If a consistent number of papers approaches or documents the interventions of the origin states in international migration, only a scarce number of them explicitly deals with migration policies at origin, whatever the term used, and even a scarcer number defines migration policies at origin. There is a huge variety in this literature, and one can hardly speak about consistent main directions. Starting from the analysis of Weinar (2014) and de Haas & Vezzoli (2011), we have identified five major topics coagulating the interest for the interventions of origin states in international migration: one discussing the border/exit restrictions/passport as ways to manage migration; one discussing migration-development nexus usually in relation to less developed countries; another one discussing the interventions of the origin state in relation to its diaspora, one approaching interventions of the origin state in terms of foreign affairs goals and, newly, one approaching the topic in transnational terms. Same type of origin

interventions may be approached from different perspectives (e.g. interventions related to diaspora may be approached in the frame of international relations, transnational perspective or development perspective), and, in the most cases, the global view on origin country as a whole is lacking. Yet, classifying in this way and briefly discussing every directions allow a first look on the huge heterogeneity on the way origin interventions are approached and on the consistent effort needed to be done in order to recompose – from an origin perspective – this heterogeneity into the homogeneity associated with defining interventions as a policy.

Border/exit/passport

Directly controlling emigration through the means of borders/passport regulations seems to be considered mainly an affair of the past. As Weiner (2014) pertinently notices, especially the restrictions related to exit are currently connected with totalitarian (or less democratic) regimes and placed in opposition to the core principles guiding the liberal democracies. As Mau et al. (2012) argument, once the UN's General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Humans Rights in 1949, with its 13th article guaranteeing the right of free leaving of any country and the free return to own country, "...Western liberal democracies in particular proved highly committed to the right of exit..." (p. 23) As far as more and more countries in the World can be assigned to (at least to some degree) to the category of (liberal) democracies, the studies committed to border tends to concentrate on controlling the entry and to link the issue to immigration policy aspects (the entire literature developed on the US border enforcement/its effects on Mexican migration is one illustration). From this perspective, the discussions pay attention (more) to cases of solid liberal democracies and developed countries as destination spaces.

Migration and development nexus

The current environment of moderate optimism towards migration and development relation (de Haas, 2010), seems to generate a constant concern for the intervention of origin states in international migration. Starting timidly in 1990s "...the interest in the impact of migration on development has burgeoned into somewhat organized international debate" (Newland, 2007).

Remittances (and the way of managing them in the advantage of origin country), brain drain (and the way of managing it to extract benefits for origin or to diminish the loses), and beneficial forms of migration (e.g. circular migration) seem to be the main points of interest. Centring the interest in the developing world, irrespectively if one country related or general approaches, the main tendency is to describe the interventions and to evaluate/discuss their impact on development.

Diaspora related interventions

Probably few topics experienced lately such a big increase in interest as diaspora and for few there are so many discussions about defining, specifying the meanings... (Brubaker, 2005) This increase of interest was reflected also in a continuous expansion of concern

in migration – as one of the fundamental processes leading to the diaspora making. Discussing about diaspora policies, Weinar (2014) identifies two broad lines of coagulating the origin state interventions in this direction: one aiming at influencing the destination states decisions through the pressure of migrants and the other aiming to attract diaspora members in the process of development at origin (in this case there is an obvious overlap with the previous identified topic.) From the consistent pool of articles that in a way or another touch upon the issue, it seems that only few papers are systematically trying to identify, discuss and analyze *diaspora policies* as a whole pack of measures related to the origin country (Gamlen, 2006, 2008)

Using interventions in migration for foreign affair purposes

Another new body of literature investigates the interventions of origin state in international migration from the perspective of foreign affairs (Teitelbaum, 1984). In this case, migration is not the dead end of interventions, but the mean internationally used to pressure in negotiating some controversial points or obtaining benefits. (The similarity with diaspora intervention in order to influence destination country decisions through the pressure of migrants is obvious, but in this case the level of negotiation/pressure is inter-governmental, not directly involving migrants, but affecting migrants.)

Transnational approaches

The emergence of transnationalism and its surge in academia is also reflected in the way the origin state interferences in international migration are approached in the literature. Generally the type of interventions approached on this label are similar to those analyzed under the umbrella of diasporic studies (e.g. Smith, 2008 approaches external voting rights in the case of Mexican in terms of diasporic institutionalization; Lafleur, 2013 approaches the same issue, of external voting, under the head of transnational politics) but with more emphasis on migration/migrants related aims.

Apart from these approaches, there is also a mainly descriptive literature, especially developed under different international organization interests in the area of migration, documenting the origin state interventions. Usually, they are centred on one dimension of intervention and may refer several countries (e.g. OECD, 2004 – on bilateral agreements) or refer one country trying to describe the entire array of intervention (e.g. Biao, 2003 – on China interventions in migration).

It is difficult to catch a sense of migration policies in this entire diversity. The papers approaching the issue of origin state interventions in terms of *policy* are only few and those providing a definition are even fewer. Massey, in 1999, discusses about role of the migrant-sending states, but he does not use a specific term (emigration policy/migration policy at origin/migration and diaspora policy etc.) and does not provide a definition. In his view migration policies seems to deal with increasing/decreasing the volume and changing the patterns of migration as consequence of origin decision (p. 310-312; 317). As concrete measures, exit restrictions (in the past), and the efforts to stimulate migration (viewed as a beneficial process for origin countries) seem to be the main components of sending state interventions.

Years later, from a completely different perspective, Gamlen (2006) defines *diaspora policy* under the declared interest in comparative analysis and the caution of mentioning that interventions related to diaspora are highly heterogeneous and consequently suspected of not being "policy" in a classical definition of the term. He does not provide an encompassing definition of diaspora policy, but identify three large dimensions of it: "*capacity building* policies, aimed at discursively producing a state-centric 'transnational national society', and developing a set of corresponding state institutions; *extending rights to the diaspora*, thus playing a role that legitimates the sovereign, and *extracting obligation from diaspora*, based on the premise that emigrants owe loyalty to this legitimate sovereign"¹ (p. 4-5).

In the same direction, oriented to conceptualize, quantify and compare policies, de Haas & Vezzoli (2011), within the framework of a large research project (DEMIG), propose a definition of what they call "emigration policies". de Haas & Vezzoli discuss about emigration policies, as "...laws, rules, measures, and practices implemented by national states with the objective to influence the volume, origin, destination and internal composition of emigration flows" (:6) adding that they "... might also include laws, rules and practices on the protection of rights and conditions of citizens abroad, and in that context, they sometimes regulate conditions upon return" (*ibidem*). In the subsequent analysis, they accentuate the encouraging/discouraging orientation of emigration the policy, and extend the term to include "no intervention" as a type of policy (i.e. *laissez-faire*² policy in their words). Based on this definition, they discuss three types of emigration policies: minimal regulation and laissez fair; encouraging emigration, and restricting emigration. The definition provided in 2011 was used in the subsequent analyses of DEMIG project of migration policies (as including emigration and immigration policies) (de Haas et al., 2014a, de Haas et al., 2014b)

Within the frame of another research project (CARIM EAST), Weinar (2014) proposes a change in the perspective we are used to have about the European Union, by looking at the supranational structure not as an immigration, but as an emigration space. She discusses about "emigration and diaspora policies", including, as the collocation suggests, the two dimensions in a whole. The new unity is not discussed as a specific type of policy (thus any reference to the heterogeneity of the construct is avoided), but is treated consequently. In her view, *emigration policies* denote "all policies that facilitate or curb mobility (outward or return) across international borders" (p. 5), while *diaspora policies* include two components: diaspora building policies ("which establish a link with the individuals and communities abroad" (*ibidem*)) and diaspora engagement policies, which "...provide emigrants and diaspora members with a set of rights and obligations..." (*ibidem*)

An operational definition of migration policies at origin

Our attempt to propose a definition of migration policies at origin is based on several assumptions and interests that guided and influenced the way we define and

¹ My emphasis

² Emphasis in original

operationalize. It is underlain by the assumption that *policy on paper* may be meaningfully analysed as proxy for policy (Czaika & de Haas, 2013; Helbing et al., 2013). Even if the implementation of laws and regulations may be far from their *on paper form*, yet, the mere existence of *the paper* form is giving the shape and creates a space of potential actions. Additionally to this assumption, the paper is built under some specific research interests guiding the way of defining and operationalizing.

The *first* interest is to produce a definition (and a consequent operationalization) to be used for comparative purposes. Setting this standard raises, in our opinion, the level of comprehension (i.e. capacity to include) of one definition and lightens the efforts to identify the concrete laws, rules and regulations associated with migration in specific origin countries. The *second* interest is to produce a definition/operationalization that could be used on large time-scale. This aim is particularly relevant in investigating the way policies develop in time and to identify their connectedness with the development of the phenomenon in itself. This is also related to the *third* interest of creating a data base of laws of regulations, subject to a primary codification allowing just basic checks on the validity of the definition/operationalization.

Under these specific assumption/interests, starting from the (only) two definitions identified in the literature (de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011; Weinar, 2014), we define *migration policies at origin* as *the laws, rules and regulations adopted by the origin states in order to influence the volume, trajectories, destinations/origin, and composition of the out-flows and return flows; to modify one of the own migrants' statuses or to support the own migrants while abroad [sic!]*.

Defining migration policies at origin in this way raises several points of discussion.

The *first* one is including the *intentionality* towards migration/migrants in definition. If justified in theory, this is raising a lot of problems in practice. Castles (2004) discusses about the difficulty of identifying the aims of policy, and to make distinction between the open stated and hidden ones. This general problem of identifying may be accentuated in the case of migration by the divergent interests in relation with the development of the phenomenon. Mainly this is the case of immigration policies (see Freeman, 1995). We do not have a clear view on how migration policies at origin are elaborated, but some authors (de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011) argument this is also their case. Solution proposed by the above mentioned authors – taking into account the official stated goal of interventions – will also be adopted in this case. Yet, and this is making the transition towards *the second* source of confusions: some of the laws, rules and regulations affecting migration/migrants are not directed towards them, but towards larger categories to which migrants/migration belong. This is the case of diaspora (or whatever other term one origin state may use to refer what it recognizes as being its population living abroad). If the measures addressing diaspora are not directly related to migrants, but to other component of diaspora (e.g. "accidental diaspora" in terms of Brubaker, 2000), the inclusion of these measures in migration policies at origin will, at a first glance, unjustifiably extend the extension of the term. Yet, not including them in migration policies at origin may hinder the unravelling of some mechanisms of policy creation: it is possible to have a simple "de facto" extension to migration/migrants in implementation not notified by another piece of legislation. The inclusion of diaspora policy into migration policies at origin seems to be rather a subject of controversy.

Weinar (2014) discusses about it as part of the efforts to manage migration at origin, but she simply juxtaposes it to emigration policies, talking about emigration and diaspora policies; de Haas & Vezzoli (2011), discussing only about emigration policies, let opened the possibility to include "the protection and rights of citizens abroad" in emigration policies; Gamlen (2006, 2008) approaches diaspora policy as distinctive and unrelated to other policy areas. We clearly assume here the inclusion of all policies aiming to support or to grant rights/obligations to migrants (while abroad) in migration policies at origin. The main argument is related to the possible influence of these policies on keeping the contact with origin (see Heisler (1985) comments on the influence of bilateral agreements during guest workers phase in European migration) and probably influencing the probabilities or smoothing the process or return (and thus inclusively the emigration policies). The second argument is related to the way return (a flow) is approached: encouraging return is a process addressing the migrant population, not the stayers or returnees. Inclusion/exclusion of migrants (while abroad *sic!*) need to be, in our view, consistent on the whole spectrum of measures considered.

At least as complex as about diaspora, it is the discussion about inclusion/non-inclusion of the policies aiming to manage the effects of migration. Theoretically, they can be excluded as being more part of the development policies (de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011). Yet, the link migration – development may be easily invoked to implement policies aiming to influence the volume, and especially the trajectories and composition of the flows. Signing bilateral agreements, for example, opens or enlarges the channel of contract work and, if the agreements concern low qualified workers, influences the composition of the out-flows. This means that some of the interventions in migration aiming in fact development are implicitly included (by any of the discussed definitions) into emigration policies. (Or the reverse: if one state explicitly aims through all of its interventions in international migration the development of the country, then there is no emigration/migration policy left aside.) Because of this overlap between different segments of the policy, we have decided to keep the interventions taken in order to manage the consequence of migration outside of our definition.

The discussion about including/non-including diaspora policy and development related interventions in international migration into migration policy at origin, also opens the space for another related debate about how to make a clear distinction between migration and non-migration policies and where to draw the delineating line, as far as some of the policies regarding labour, education etc. may also (powerfully) influence the process of migration (de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011). Here we have excluded all policies that do not *directly* target migration, irrespectively of the magnitude of their effects on the process of migration.

The definition we propose is then one very large, covering three fields of interventions: interventions directed to the process of emigration (aiming to change the volume, trajectories, destinations, composition of the out-flows), interventions directed towards migrants (while they are abroad) – extended here to the entire diaspora policy, and interventions related to the process of return migration (aiming to change the origin, volume or composition). (Figure 2 presents three fields and associated interventions in a schematic manner.)

Emigration related interventions include, in our approach, three large sub-fields of intervention: those related to exit; to opening new channels for migration and, finally, those related to securing the international migration.

Exit restrictions are considered under two facets: direct exit restrictions – meaning any kind of conditions that one origin state may require to be fulfilled before according the right of exit and indirect exit restrictions – following from changes in regulations related to the passport as a fundamental mean to exercises the right to travel.

Opening new channels for migration is fundamentally related to facilitate the departure abroad, offering alternatives to the private companies acting as recruiters, by establishing public structures to deal with (labour) migration abroad. The establishment of such public structures is often related to signing bilateral agreements, but, as far as bilateral agreements usually includes (also) other provisions (see OECD, 2004; Heisler, 1985) we have prefer treat them under the sub-dimension of securing migration.

Securing migration refers actions taken in the direction of building a safer environment for migration. Signing bilateral agreements, regulating/controlling the activity of private recruiters and making efforts in order to assure the portability of rights are the main categories identified.

In the case of *Diaspora related interventions*, we have mainly worked with the operationalization proposed by Gamlen (2006, 2008). Yet, the Gamlen's proposal is not entirely fit for a "global" approach from the origin perspective. There are several types of measure excluded here by comparison with Gamlen's operationalization: media coverage was converted into public media institutions (public TV channels or newspapers dedicated to diaspora) – the reason behind this being that in our approach policies are actions (towards); commissioning studies or reports as far as improving statistics (dimension recognizing diaspora were also excluded because of their very general character); Moreover, for the excluded type of measures, there is a low probability to be suited to the policy on paper approach (i.e. to have dedicated laws or regulations). For obvious reasons (they are more reflectign the emigration dimension than diasporic one) providing pre-departure services and extensive bilateral agreements were excluded from the dimension

Return migration interventions are kept separately, even though the general tendency is to include them into emigration policy, as Weinar (2014) and de Haas & Vezzoli do. Yet, it is obviously that, event referring a flow oriented towards origin; return migration has a different meaning. Theoretically, return related intervention may appear once the emigration matures. Moreover, in our opinion, placing the regulations concerning return in the category of emigration policy is suspect of distorting time related analysis of the different dimensions considered here.

Figure 2 Fields of the migration policy at origin

<i>Emigration</i> related interventions	<i>Diaspora</i> related interventions	<i>Return migration</i> related interventions
<p>I. Exit restrictions: I.1. Direct exit restrictions: requirements for exit visas or government permission; exit restrictions for women; exit restriction for persons of the age of national compulsory service; exist conditions related to the type and costs of travelling abroad I.2. Indirect exit restrictions: passport used as a mean of restricting or enabling the movement: allowing the passport to be obtained by mail or in person; while abroad or only in the origin country II. Extending the channels for international migration: public structures on the departure market III. Securing international migration: bilateral agreements; regulation of the private operators on the departure market; international portability of social security rights;</p>	<p>I. Diaspora building policies: I.1. Cultivating diaspora: celebrating national holidays honouring expatriates with awards; convening diaspora congresses; proclaiming affinity with and responsibility for diaspora; issuing special IDs/visas; national language and history education; public media dedicated (newspapers, TV channels) I.2. Recognizing diaspora: expanded consular units; maintaining a diaspora program, bureaucratic unit, or dedicated ministry II. Diaspora Integration II.1. Extending rights: permitting dual nationality, dual citizenship or external voting rights; special legislative representation; consulting expatriate councils or advisory bodies; intervening in labour relations/public structure dedicated to this aim; supplementing health; welfare and education services support; upholding property rights II.2. Extracting obligations: taxing expatriates; customs/import incentives; special economic zones; investment services, tax; incentives, matching fund; programs, diaspora bonds & financial products; facilitating remittances; fellowships; skilled expatriate networks</p>	<p>I. Encouraging voluntary return: return migration policies II. Accepting forced return: re-admission agreements</p>

Concluding remarks and further developments

The paper addresses migration policies from the perspective of origin country, with the aims of defining and operationalizing. Our endeavour is motivated by the intention to investigate the stance liberal democratic origin countries take about migration. Even though a consistent number of studies document the interventions of sending states towards migration, the literature pays little attention to conceptualizing the issue. As de Haas & Vezzoli (2011) suggest this is probably mainly the result of a biased research agenda toward destination country perspective. There are only few papers approaching migration policies from an origin country perspective, and even fewer defining and operationalizing them. Starting mainly from two identified attempts (Weinar, 2014, de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011), we propose our own definition. In comparison with the previous works in the field, it goes in the direction of extending the scope of definition, including interventions related to emigration/diaspora and return, but excluding those aiming to manage the consequences of migration. Having a proposal of the definition and a tentative operationalization of it does not equate, in our view, to the final step. We started this paper with the assumption that there is a policy aiming to regulate international migration at origin and, by consequence, it is meaningful to talk about it. The danger with this approach is to attach an umbrella concept to realities not belonging together. There is yet little information about the consistency of the field and the *pitfall* in this case is to create a reality (by defining) to which to attach a label (migration policy at origin, in this case) and to study it as a "promising field of research" (Portes, 1997). Reformulating the problem: here we have assumed a general stance of origin states towards international migration and some actions associated with it and we have defined this general stance as assuring coherence to the way origin states manage emigration, the relations with diaspora and return migration. If there are arguments to hypothesize the things are going this way, the only valid proof is the confrontation of the definition/operationalization with "the reality" of laws, rules and regulations of at least one origin country. This further step is not going to tell the story of the migration policies in that origin country, but it will just test the capacity of our definition/operationalization to produce meaningful results. To the end of this second step, the initial process of construction may be taken again under scrutiny and adjustments made to the initial model of defining migration policies at origin.

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