

MIGRATION AND DIASPORA POLICY INSTITUTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

Many Latin American countries face the challenge of mass emigration. Some of them have created complex policy institutions to tackle this challenge and to maintain ties with the growing diaspora, while others have done little in this respect. This article analyses Latin American diaspora governance based on the existing institutions in each country. It shows that it is not necessarily the most affected countries that have the most developed policy responses. There is a group of countries with high emigration rate but with low governmental capacities (e.g. Bolivia, Honduras) where no significant policy diaspora institutions and policies were created. Another group of countries shows sufficient government capacities, but the emigration issue is not seen as very relevant there, thus diaspora policy institutions and policies are also lacking – or they were created only for specific groups, such as the highly skilled emigrants (e.g. Brazil, Chile). Finally, a group of countries with medium to high emigration rate and medium governmental capacities created the most innovative and robust diaspora institutions and policies (e.g. Mexico, Ecuador).

Keywords: Migration, migration management, diaspora and migration policy institutions, Latin America

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INTRODUCTION

Middle- and lower-middle income countries all around the globe are getting increasingly affected by outward migration processes. While the overall developmental effects of mass emigration are debated, it is sure that several mechanisms exist to design and implement policies that manage the process. However, systematic research on migration policies and their institutional background is a rather new area of studies, and the literature focuses mostly on immigration, not on emigration policies. This article wishes to fill a gap by observing the issue of migration from the perspective of the government of a country from where a large number of people emigrate. In other words: what can a government do if people leave the country?

Diaspora policies – as these activities are usually labelled – might have different historical, institutional and structural features in different countries.¹ This article observes how a set of countries of a given region designed new governmental institutions in order to maintain transnational ties with their emigrant citizens.² The region observed is Latin America, one of the most important sending areas of labour migration worldwide. Although it does not engage in cross-regional comparisons, it can be understood as a point of reference for scholars and policymakers in the field of diaspora policies in other regions of the world, including Hungary and the Central and South Eastern European region.

The article is divided into four parts. First, I present the historical background of Latin American migration patterns and its management. Second, I evaluate the relative importance of emigration and the capabilities for policymaking (as independent variables) for Latin American countries. Third, I present the institutional and legal reactions of these governments to migration and diaspora issues (as dependent variables). Finally, I analyze the correlation between these two factors and draw conclusions on the viability of transnational diaspora governance.

¹ Sources of information for this article include the results of a survey, to be referred as Diaspora Unit Survey (DUS, 2014-2015), carried out for the PhD thesis of the author (Corvinus University of Budapest, Institute of International Studies). Ten Latin American Ministries of Foreign Affairs provided information on the functioning of their respective governmental unit. For further information, see Soltész, 2016.

² By diaspora, the totality of the emigrants are understood here, i.e. the people who were born in a given country and live in another country, regardless of their citizenship and legal status (documented or undocumented).

BACKGROUND

Latin America³ was a region of net immigration for approximately 450 years, although most of this time migration was either forced or administered within a framework of colonial systems. Net migration rates for the whole continent turned negative in the late 1950s, yet showing important regional differences. By 1950, net migration rate was negative in 10 out of 19 Latin American countries, and for four more countries it was around zero (see *Table 1*). The main immigration countries of the early 1900s, such as Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil and Uruguay gradually lost their attractiveness, partly because the countries of origin of former migration flows (mainly Southwest Europe) experienced economic growth, and partly because economic hardships and political imbalances made these countries less and less attractive for prospective migrants – however, immigrants kept on arriving from neighbouring countries (Radcliffe and Westwood, 1996).

Mass emigration flows occurred due to economic and political shocks, many of which stand out from the time series in the table of net migration rate, such as Fidel Castro's coming to power in 1959, the coup d'état in Uruguay in 1973 or the Mexican debt crisis in 1982. What definitely turned the tide was, however, the wave of structural adjustments that swept through Latin America in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the consequences thereof.

In the meantime, however, a handful of 'success stories' are also present, i. e. countries that due to their good economic performance (and also to the hectic situation of their neighbors) became small regional hubs of inward migration, such as Costa Rica, Chile and Panama. The majority of Latin American countries are nonetheless sending more migrants than they receive.

Regarding the current situation, the single largest country of origin in Latin America is Mexico, and almost every Mexican migrant is in the United States. Mexicans add up to almost half of the total Latin American emigrant stock (including intraregional migrants), and a bit more than half of those who are outside Latin America (see details in *Table 2*). Very far from Mexico's 13.2 million stock of emigrants, Colombia holds the second place with 2.4 million and Brazil comes third with 1.8 million emigrants. Data for all Latin American countries, based on estimations of United Nations (2013), are shown below.

³ By Latin America, the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking sovereign nations of the Americas are understood here, 19 countries altogether.

Table 1: Net migration rate in Latin American countries per 5-year periods (person/1000)

Country	1950 1955	1955 1960	1960 1965	1965 1970	1970 1975	1975 1980	1980 1985	1985 1990	1990 1995	1995 2000	2000 2005	2005 2010
Argentina	3	1	1	1	2	-2	1	1	0	0	-1	-1
Bolivia	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-1	-2	-2	-3	-2	-3	-3
Brazil	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-1
Chile	-1	-1	-1	-1	-2	-1	-1	-1	1	1	0	0
Colombia	-2	-3	-3	-3	-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
Costa Rica	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	4	7	4	3
Cuba	-1	-2	-5	-6	-4	-3	-5	-1	-2	-3	-3	-3
Dominican R.	-2	-2	-2	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3
Ecuador	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-1
El Salvador	-6	-4	-1	-3	-5	-9	-10	-11	-9	-14	-12	-9
Guatemala	0	0	-1	-2	-4	-7	-7	-7	-8	-7	-5	-3
Honduras	1	1	1	-6	-3	-2	-3	-3	-5	-6	-5	-3
Mexico	-1	-1	-2	-2	-3	-3	-5	-3	-2	-4	-5	-4
Nicaragua	-2	-1	-1	-2	-3	-4	-6	-8	-5	-6	-8	-7
Panama	-3	-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	1	1	1
Paraguay	-10	-8	-7	-6	-4	-3	-1	-1	-1	-2	-2	-1
Peru	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-2	-3	-3	-5	-5
Uruguay	1	2	0	-2	-10	-4	-2	-2	-1	-2	-6	-3
Venezuela	6	5	1	1	6	6	1	1	0	0	0	0
Latin America	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-2	-2	-1	-2	-2	-2

Source: United Nations Population Database (2013b).

As seen in *Table 2's* right column, it is not only the absolute numbers that count. While from the perspective of the country of destination, the sheer flow or stock number of migrants already tells a story, from the point of view of the country of origin it is the ratio of emigrants to the total population that is important. Tiny El Salvador is heading this list with 25%, followed by Cuba (13%), Paraguay (11.9%) and the Dominican Republic (11.6%).

Regarding the destinations for Latin American migrants, the United States is by far the most important one, being the number one destination in 12 out of 19 cases and the number two in four further cases. The second destination is Spain (figuring three times as first and seven times as second most important), while the third one is Argentina (first destination for three countries and second for one more). In the top 20, there are nine countries in Latin America, seven in Europe, the two countries of North America (excluding Mexico), one in Asia and one in

Australia. It is worth noting that migration between neighbouring countries is very significant in Latin America, especially where regional integration processes such as the Mercosur have been facilitating the free movement of their citizens (United Nations, 2013).

Table 2: Emigrant stock (by country of birth) of Latin American countries, total values and as compared to usually resident population (%) (2013)

Emigrant stock from Latin American countries (total)		Emigrant stock as compared to usually resident population (%)	
Mexico	13 212 419	El Salvador	25,06
Colombia	2 448 385	Cuba	12,99
Brazil	1 769 639	Paraguay	11,92
El Salvador	1 526 093	Dominican R.	11,58
Cuba	1 476 344	Nicaragua	11,02
Peru	1 373 387	Mexico	10,68
Dominican R.	1 190 441	Uruguay	9,88
Ecuador	1 144 408	Honduras	8,40
Guatemala	1 049 865	Bolivia	7,35
Argentina	980 580	Ecuador	7,31
Paraguay	770 441	Guatemala	6,69
Bolivia	764 862	Colombia	5,17
Honduras	659 606	Peru	4,49
Nicaragua	655 117	Panama	3,94
Venezuela	630 686	Chile	3,44
Chile	604 008	Costa Rica	2,77
Uruguay	336 741	Argentina	2,31
Panama	149 952	Venezuela	2,08
Costa Rica	130 364	Brazil	0,87
Total	30 873 338	Total	5,16

Source: United Nations (2013a).

An obvious result of the emigration flows is that remittances have skyrocketed in the 1990s. Mexico is the largest remittance receiver in terms of absolute value, not only in Latin America but in the whole world. Other countries with a significant diaspora follow Mexico, with Guatemala coming second, followed by Colombia, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic. *Table 3* shows the absolute values of remittances in (current) US dollars and the percentage of this value related to their nominal GDP (in which remittances are not included).

Table 3: Inflow of remittances to Latin America (total and as % of GDP, in current million USD, 2013)⁴

Remittances (total, in current million USD, 2013)		Remittances as % of GDP (total current, 2013)	
Mexico	23 022	Honduras	16,95%
Guatemala	5 379	El Salvador	16,37%
Dominican R.	4 485	Guatemala	9,99%
Colombia	4 449	Nicaragua	9,97%
El Salvador	3 971	Dominican R.	7,33%
Honduras	3 136	Bolivia	3,93%
Peru	2 707	Ecuador	2,60%
Brazil	2 537	Paraguay	2,05%
Ecuador	2 458	Mexico	1,82%
Bolivia	1 201	Peru	1,34%
Nicaragua	1 081	Costa Rica	1,21%
Costa Rica	596	Colombia	1,17%
Paraguay	591	Panama	1,06%
Argentina	533	Uruguay	0,21%
Panama	451	Brazil	0,11%
Chile	136	Argentina	0,09%
Uruguay	122	Chile	0,05%
Venezuela	120	Venezuela	0,03%

Source: World Bank (2015b). For Cuba no data is available.

Among other factors the above ones already explain, why Latin American policymakers have focused their attention on emigration-related issues. However, as already mentioned, in the Latin American context ‘migration’ meant, for centuries, ‘immigration’. If a Latin American country had migration-related policies, it meant policies of immigration, with few, although notable, exceptions such as Mexico. Meanwhile, by the end of the 1990s, many Latin American governments had to realize that a large part of the country’s population has moved abroad for a longer period and they are not willing to return within a shorter time period, even if political oppression or extreme economic hardships have ended. Reanimating the contact with the diaspora emerged as a new goal in the context of the gradual restriction in US (and, later, European) immigration policies also undocumented immigrants’ right to enter and stay in these countries became an issue. Together with the wish to attract

⁴ Given the nature of the issue, the figures on remittances shown here are rough estimations.

emigrants' remittances and investment, these are the aims of present-day Latin American governments when designing transnational policies towards their diaspora.

In the current context, the government of a Latin American country of origin is basically interested in that its citizens can enter safely and legally the country of destination, have their rights respected there, have their requirements met to become economically successful, and still maintain their contacts with their household members in the country of origin, so the latter can get financial contributions. Once the government of a country of origin decides to build policies in order to achieve these goals, they will start being gradually included into the agenda of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of each country.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF EMIGRATION AND THE CAPABILITIES FOR POLICYMAKING

The level of development of a country has an effect on the level of outward migration it experiences. Yet, it can be assumed that not only the emigration ratio, but also other factors come into play when institutions and policies are to be built in order to tackle the challenges. In the following, I present the factors that can be seen as independent variables of a diaspora policy architecture. These are: 1) the level of income and development of a country; 2) the overall quality and effectiveness of a country's governance; 3) the size of the diaspora. With relevant indicators, I construct categories which feed into a general categorization of Latin American countries.

Income and level of development

Development can be conceptualized around many indicators, the most convenient of which are Gross Domestic Product and Gross National Income. In this respect, a categorization of the World Bank (2014) which groups national economies into four categories is relevant. According to this categorization, there are three country groups in Latin America (as no "low-income" country can be found in the region):

- Lower-middle (1,046–4,125 USD): Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua;
- Upper-middle (4,126–12,736 USD): Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru;
- High (12,736 USD <) Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela.

These categories can be a good starting point, however, there are other indicators to take into account. For an analysis with a focus on development, the HDI (Human Development Index) is also fundamental. According to the latest Human Development Report, there are four categories – again, there is no Latin American country in the lowest-ranking group. The division is therefore the following (UNDP, 2014):

- Very high (HDI 0.8–1): Argentina, Chile, Cuba;
- High (HDI 0.7–0.799): Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
- Medium (HDI 0.55–0.699): Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay.

By combining these two categorizations, it can be said that Argentina and Chile are definitely of the highest rank, and Uruguay (with a HDI of 0.79) can also be added to the top three. Following these three, there are two ‘uneasy’ countries: Venezuela (with high GNI and high HDI) and Cuba (with upper-middle GNI and very high HDI). Venezuela owes its high GNI to its petroleum-based economy, while Cuba’s high HDI is shadowed by the scarcity of consumption goods and the restrictions of personal freedom. To these two countries, Brazil should be added: while it scores lower in GNI per capita and HDI values than the Southern Cone countries and Venezuela, due to its sheer size (and to the fact that Brazilian middle and higher classes comprise tens of millions of people), it should be separated from the rest of ‘mid-range’ countries.

‘Mid-range’, in this respect, means an upper-middle GNI and a high HDI. This is the case of Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Peru. Most of these countries are important countries of origin for large stocks of emigrants – perhaps with the exception of Costa Rica and Panama. Mexico is obviously on a different scale than the other countries in this group, however, as opposed to Brazil, there is no justification for treating it separately, as geographical and income features are less diverse than in the Brazilian case.

Finally, countries with a lower-middle income and medium human development include Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Paraguay can also be added to this group, despite having a slightly higher GNI than the others. The common feature of these countries is the (relatively) small

size (with the exception of Bolivia) and a lower level of development and the economic focus on the export of raw materials.

A developmental classification of Latin American countries can therefore be sketched as follows:

Table 4: A possible categorization of Latin American countries based on their level of development

Category	Countries
High development	Argentina, Chile, Uruguay
Asymmetrical high development ^a	Brazil, Cuba, Venezuela
Medium development	Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru
Low development	Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay

Source: Own compilation based on World Bank (2014) and UNDP (2014).

^a In the case of Cuba and Venezuela, development patterns are very different from the rest of the countries, and reliable data are scarce. In general it can be raised that the scores for some countries should be critically evaluated, like in the case of Cuba.

Governance

The next issue to be assessed is the question of governance. Very much related to the question of development, Latin American governments have different capacities and capabilities for conceiving, designing and implementing public policies. For the present analysis, this notion has to be completed with the specific aspect of whether these governments are capable of making policies towards the diaspora, i.e. if there are severe hindering factors that would make these attempts unviable.

The most convenient indicators in this respect are the World Bank's series of "Worldwide Governance Indicators" (WGIs) which measure six key dimensions of governance, from 1996 onwards: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Lack of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption. While WGIs are widely contested and criticized, they are still the most overarching indicators for quantifying the overall quality of governance.

For the purposes of this study, and in order to answer the question set above, it is the Government Effectiveness Index (GEI) which seems to be the most telling.

As of 2014, Latin American countries had the following scores (the best possible score being 2.5, the worst possible score being -2.5) (World Bank, 2015i):

- 1-1.5: Chile;
- 0.5-1: none;
- 0-0.5: Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay;
- -0.5-0: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru;
- -1--0.5: Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay;
- -1.5-1: Venezuela.

While many of the country scores seem to correlate with developmental scores, it is interesting to observe those that are very different. Among higher income countries, Argentina scores bad and Venezuela extremely bad, while among mid-range countries, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama have a better score. The following table shows a simplified categorization based on the World Bank's Government Effectiveness Index (GEI):

Table 5: A possible categorization of Latin American countries based on the effectiveness of their governance in 2014

Category	Countries
High effectiveness of governance	Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay
Intermediate effectiveness of governance	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru
Low effectiveness of governance	Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Venezuela

Source: Own compilation based on World Bank GEI (2015c).

It has to be added that there are two countries where significant political discrepancies exist between the government and the diaspora: Cuba and Venezuela. In these two cases it is predictable that overall government effectiveness will deteriorate when it comes to possible cooperation with the diaspora. As Venezuela already scores low, it affects the medium score of Cuba which is arguably low instead.

Diaspora size

Third, the size and the distribution of the diaspora should be categorized, together with its economic importance for the country of origin, based on the net amount of remittances they send, and more importantly, the ratio of this amount to the country's GDP.

Regarding the emigrant stock as compared to usually resident populations, Latin American countries can be distributed into three groups of approximately equal size:

- 10%–25.1%: Salvador, Cuba, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Mexico;
- 5%–9.9%: Uruguay, Honduras, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Colombia;
- 0.8%–4.9%: Peru, Panama, Chile, Costa Rica, Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil.

Regarding remittances, groups can be formed according to the ratio of remittances as compared to the total amount of GDP (with the exception of Cuba having no data):

- 4–17%: Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic;
- 1–3.9%: Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Mexico, Peru, Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama;
- 0–0.9%: Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela.

Relative importance of emigration for a country can therefore be summarized based on these two features. Most of the countries belong to the same 'range' according to both categorizations. There are cases when diaspora appear to be more important regarding its absolute size than regarding the proportional amount of remittances they send (Paraguay, Mexico, Uruguay), while opposite cases (Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, Panama, Costa Rica) also occur. In general, data on remittances seem to be more telling about the importance of the diaspora, thus this has been the base for categorization. As there is no reliable remittances data for Cuba, it has been classified according to the size of its diaspora to the first category.

Table 6: A possible categorization of Latin American countries based on the relative economic importance of their diaspora

Category	Countries
Very important	Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua
Rather important	Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru
Rather unimportant	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela

Source: Own compilation based on United Nations (2013) and World Bank (2015b).

Categorization of Latin American diaspora policies

Based on these three categorizations, a lot can be said about the importance and the capabilities of the diaspora policy issue in each country. By assigning numerical values to the categories, we could foresee how motivated decision makers could handle the issue, and how successful they could be. The logical maximum of points would therefore go to countries with low development level, high governance effectiveness and high economic importance of the diaspora. On the other hand, the logical minimum would go to countries which enjoy a high development, have a very ineffective government and the diaspora is economically unimportant.

It is obvious that these are artificial combinations, as a high development level usually correlates with higher effectiveness of the government and with a lower level of economic importance of the diaspora, and accordingly, lower development level implies lower effectiveness of government and higher level of economic importance of the diaspora. Actually, when looking at the *Tables 4, 5 and 6*, we can identify clusters of countries that show these features. For example, Chile is a good example for the former case, and Honduras for the latter.

Therefore, it seems to be reasonable to draw three ‘patterns’ of emigration and diaspora, seen from the perspective of their possible implications for diaspora policymaking. These patterns are summarized in the following table.

Table 7: Categorization of Latin American countries based on the economic importance of their diaspora and the governmental capabilities for diaspora policymaking

Pattern	Development level	Governance effectiveness	Economic importance of the diaspora	Countries
1	High	High or intermediate	Low	Argentina, Brazil (2), Chile, Uruguay
2	Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate	Bolivia (3), Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay (3), Peru
3	Low	Low or intermediate	High	Dominican Republic (2), El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua
4	Asymmetrical	Low	Controversial	Cuba, Venezuela

Numbers in brackets show that the given country could arguably be classified to another category.

Source: Own compilation, see details at Tables 4, 5 and 6.

What has been summarized above is a preliminary assessment on the importance of the diaspora in the economic and social processes of each Latin American country – based on the overall development level of the country, the absolute and relative size of the diaspora itself and of the remittances they send home – and on the general effectiveness of the governmental activities of the given country. By these factors, four patterns have been identified, three of which are logical positions in an ‘importance – capabilities matrix’. Pattern 1 marks the position of ‘lower importance’ (i.e. of the diaspora) and ‘high capabilities’ (i.e. for policymaking). Pattern 2 stands for ‘intermediate importance’ and ‘intermediate capabilities’, while pattern 3 is for ‘high importance’ and ‘low capabilities’. Pattern 4, however, covers two ‘outlier’ countries, Venezuela and Cuba, in which cases neither the development level nor the capabilities of diaspora policymaking can be ‘matched’ to the rest of the countries, due to their different political systems. It is therefore expected that they will show different features regarding their diaspora policies as well.

INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL CHANGES IN POLICYMAKING

Why would a state want to build institutions and policies for its diaspora? The most evident answer is because the diaspora has resources. Obviously, they are voters, and many times they can fund political or social movements which can favor an actual government or opposition party in the country of origin. Also, given the largely economic nature of today's migratory processes, and the spectacular growth in remittance flows, countries of origin are becoming more and more dependent on the money that their citizens are earning abroad. With all the developmental potential that remittances (can) have, governments of countries of origin are motivated to invent ways of "diaspora engagement" because of the opportunity to capitalize on these resources (Vertovec, 2005; Gamlen, 2010; Délano and Gamlen, 2014).

In the following, I present the factors that can be seen as dependent variables of a migration and diaspora policy architecture, i. e. the achievements of a country to keep emigrants within the realm of its *polity*, through rights, policies and institutions. The most important features are: 1) dual citizenship regimes and extraterritorial voting rights; 2) diaspora-related laws and policy documents; 3) specialized institutional bodies in a country's governance. Based on these features, I construct categories which feed into a general categorization of Latin American countries.

Dual citizenship regimes and extraterritorial voting rights in Latin America

Very importantly, *diaspora politics* is not the same as *diaspora policies*, however, the latter would hardly exist without the former. Diaspora politics is understood here as a regular transnational political activity involving political actors of the country of origin (political parties, presidential candidates, etc.) and formal and informal groups of migrants in the country of destination (migrant associations, informal circles, etc.). It is a usual practice in electoral democracies that political actors meet, negotiate with and promise benefits for the members of every possible interest group, hoping to have their votes in the elections. The diaspora should be no exception to that: this is why diaspora politics exists.

However, the ‘diaspora vote’ is somewhat different from the vote of other interest groups, such as ‘the agricultors’ or ‘the landless peasants’. First and foremost, they are physically absent. Depending on the laws and regulations of each country, citizens living abroad on a permanent basis and with no registered address in the country of origin may or may not vote in the elections. Second, even if they may, sometimes it is really difficult for them to cast their votes personally at the consulate of the country of origin which might be very far away from the place where they live. Third, even if the diaspora is a group with some common needs and interests, they are not necessarily one single “interest group”, and fourth, they might not even care about politics in their country of origin any longer, as they expect to have their problems solved by the country of destination instead (Gamlen, 2006).

Vocal diaspora groups have nonetheless tried to have their say ever since Latin American emigration started to gain a significant dimension. Members of the exiled political opposition of the military governments in the 1970s were therefore limited in the legal means to intervene in the political life of the country that they had left behind, thus voting rights were suspended (regardless of whether elections were actually held or not), and if emigrants received the citizenship of their country of destination, it automatically meant the loss of the citizenship of the country of origin. Restrictions on dual citizenship have been in force in many Latin American countries, typically in those that went through a military regime, as in the case of Argentina, Chile or Panama (Poletti, 2007).

Regarding the right to vote, nowadays the majority of Latin American countries allow their citizens to vote in presidential elections even if they live permanently abroad, but they have to go personally to the consulate in order to exercise this right. Exceptions to this general trend are right-restricting Chile, Cuba, El Salvador and Uruguay on the one hand, as they do not provide this right to their citizens; and right-extending Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Peru on the other (see below).

Table 8 summarizes the main features of dual citizenship regimes and extraterritorial voting rights in Latin America. Most of the information has been compiled based on the “Diaspora Unit Survey” (DUS, 2014-2015) which I conducted with the Diaspora Units of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ten Latin American countries.

Table 8: Dual citizenship regimes and extraterritorial voting rights in Latin America

Country	Dual citizenship (in case of obtaining second nationality, does the first one remain vigent)	Right to vote from abroad (year when ceded and type of elections in which they can participate)	Remarks (taken from the Diaspora Unit Survey)
Argentina	No (except on the basis of bilateral treaties, e. g. with Spain)	1993, consulate, presidential, parliamentary	In referendums only if explicitly stated by the election authority
Bolivia	Yes	1984, consulate, presidential	
Brazil	Yes	1965, consulate, presidential	If a Brazilian citizen is inscribed on the electoral list, the “transit vote” rule is applied, as if he/she were a tourist outside Brazil
Chile	No (except on the basis of bilateral treaties, e. g. with Spain)	no	The Law Nr. 20.748 allowing the right to vote for the Chilean diaspora has been passed, by the next presidential election (in 2017) it should be applied.
Colombia	Yes	1961, consulate, presidential, parliamentary (upper house), one special MP at the lower house	Vote is counted to the upper house. Referendums: depends on the concrete case.
Costa Rica	Yes	2014, consulate, presidential	
Cuba	No	no	
Dominican Republic	Yes	1997, consulate, presidential, parliamentary (upper house), from 2011 migrants send 7 MPs to the lower house	
Ecuador	Yes	2002, consulate, presidential	Vote is facultative.

Source: Own compilation based on the Diaspora Unit Survey (2014-2015), Nohlen, et al. (2007), Poletti (2007), Didou (2009), Castillo (2010) and Vargas (2011) and, if relevant, the website of each institution.

Table 8: Dual citizenship regimes and extraterritorial voting rights in Latin America

Country	Dual citizenship (in case of obtaining second nationality, does the first one remain vigent)	Right to vote from abroad (year when ceded and type of elections in which they can participate)	Remarks (taken from the Diaspora Unit Survey)
El Salvador	Yes	no	
Guatemala	Yes	From 2015, consulate, presidential	
Honduras	No (except on the basis of bilateral treaties, e. g. with Spain)	2001, consulate, presidential	
Mexico	Yes	2006, postal, presidential (from 2012 also governor in Distrito Federal, Michoacán and Morelos states)	
Nicaragua	No (except on the basis of bilateral treaties, e. g. with Spain and Central American countries)	2000, consulate, presidential (in practice, however, it is rarely performed, due to lack of funding and administrative capacity)	
Panama	No	2009, postal, presidential	
Paraguay	Yes	From 2018 (approved by a 2011 referendum)	
Peru	Yes	1998, consulate (internet voting mechanism is under testing), presidential, parliamentary (extraterritorial MPs from 2010)	The feasibility of a special extraterritorial electoral district is under testing.
Uruguay	Yes	No (invalid referendum in 2009)	A draft law has been submitted to the Parliament in September 2014 by the government, still not approved.
Venezuela	Yes	1997, consulate, presidential	

Source: Own compilation based on the Diaspora Unit Survey (2014-2015), Nohlen, et al. (2007), Poletti (2007), Didou (2009), Castillo (2010) and Vargas (2011) and, if relevant, the website of each institution.

The '*standard*' is that citizens of Latin American countries living abroad on a permanent basis can maintain the citizenship of their country of origin even after obtaining the citizenship of their country of destination. Also, they can participate in the presidential elections of their country of origin (but not in other, local or referendum-type elections) if they go personally to the consulate of the country of origin. This is the case of Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala and Venezuela.

However, there are countries which are more *restrictive*. Regarding dual citizenship, there are countries which deny it altogether (Cuba and Panama) or recognize it only in the case if there is a special bilateral treaty with the country concerned (Argentina, Chile, Honduras and Nicaragua, all of which have an agreement with Spain on recognizing dual citizenship with that particular country).

There are also countries that do not restrict dual citizenship but they restrict the right to vote for migrants who live abroad on a permanent basis. This is currently the case with two countries from the previous group (Chile and Cuba) and with three others (El Salvador, Paraguay and Uruguay). However, two of these five (Chile and Paraguay) have already adopted a law allowing the diaspora to vote in the next presidential elections (2017 and 2018, respectively).

Finally, there are countries which are more '*liberal*' regarding the political participation of the diaspora. Mexico allows postal voting and Peru and Ecuador are testing the feasibility of internet voting. And there are a handful of countries which provide migrants not only with the right to vote but also with the right to be voted for. Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Peru have migrant members of the parliament. This means that there are 'extraterritorial' electoral districts: in the Dominican parliament there are MPs who represent the voters of the district of Florida or New York (Nohlen, et al., 2007; Vargas, 2011).

Within these different frameworks of *diaspora politics*, it can be expected that diaspora policies have also developed showing different features. The following section presents the legal and institutional framework of diaspora policies, their outreach and their concrete scope(s) of activity.

Legal and policy documents of diaspora policies

Traditionally, citizens of a country being abroad are entitled to consular protection, in line with many international agreements, the most important being the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963).

With the increase of emigration from Latin American countries, however, governments had to face with the challenge of having tens or hundreds of thousands of citizens in one consular district and for a staff of less than ten people. Especially during elections, when migrants lined up in long queues in front of the consulates to cast their votes, it became clear that consulates need a reinforcement in order to be able to carry out all the activities they are supposed to do (procedures of passports and visas, assisting citizens who got in trouble abroad, public notary procedures etc.). This is a *quantitative* challenge which could (or should) have been tackled by the increase in staff, budget and consular districts in the areas with a large diaspora.

Nonetheless, there are *qualitative* challenges as well. Migrants are not mere travelers or tourists but permanent residents of the country of destination where – especially if they do not hold a residence permit – they are subject to unfavorable treatment. Therefore, consulates should deal with issues of legal advice, law enforcement, and helping in an eventual return migration. All these qualitative changes need a *legal* and an *institutional* foundation (Gamlen, 2006).

Regarding the legal framework, all countries have a general legislation on migration which might or might not deal with emigrations issues, but sometimes the legal instruments regulating the Foreign Service contain the legal provisions for dealing with the diaspora. On other occasions, self-standing laws or decrees are adopted to deal with specific topics, most importantly return migration.

Regarding the institutional framework, there are many examples of how a ‘Diaspora Unit’ (understood from here onwards as a specialized institutional unit – department, division etc. – which has the main objective of dealing with the issues of the diaspora) came into being within the framework of the respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In many cases, there have already existed ‘Immigration Units’ within the respective Ministry of Interior. Usually, these two units are linked with a coordination mechanism (regular meetings etc.) but they work separately, as the target population they cover is different. Immigration Units are also larger and better equipped with legal and financial instruments for their operation.

The creation of emigration-related institutional or interinstitutional units or strategic lines of action is therefore presented in various steps, starting with the legal instruments and policy documents on which they are based. These are summarized in the following table.

Table 9: Laws and policy documents outlining diaspora policies in Latin America

Country	Relevant laws and policy documents
Argentina	Migration Law (Nº 25.871, in 2004) New Argentine Migratory Policy (<i>Nueva Política Migratoria argentina, NPMA</i> , on immigration only, in 2003)
Bolivia	Migration Law (Nº 370, in 2013)
Brazil	Alien Statute Law (Nº 6815, in 1980) Proposal for a Migration Law, Bill (<i>Projeto de Lei PL 2516/15</i> approved on 6 December 2016)
Chile	Decree-Law on Alien Affairs (Nº1094, in 1975)
Colombia	Law on the National Migration System(Nº 1465, in 2011) Law on Return Migration (Nº 1565, in 2012) Decree on the National Intersectorial Commission on Migration (Nº 1239, in 2003) Decree on the Modification of the Structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Nº 3355, in 2009) Integral Migration Policy (<i>Política Integral Migratoria</i> , Document Nº 3603 CONPES, in 2009)
Costa Rica	Law on Migration and Alien Affairs (Nº 8764, in 2010) "Integral Migratory Policy" (<i>Política Migratoria Integral</i>) document by the National Council of Migration (in 2013)
Cuba	Decree-Law on Migration (Nº 302, in 2013)
Dominican Republic	Migration Law (Nº 285, in 2004)
Ecuador	Migration Law (in 2005, modified several times) National Plan on Ecuadorians Abroad (<i>Plan Nacional de Ecuatorianos en el Exterior</i> , in 2001) National Plan on Human Development for Migrations (<i>Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Humano para las Migraciones 2007-2010</i> , in 2007) Plan of Return for the Ecuadorian Migrant (<i>Plan de Retorno para el Migrante Ecuatoriano</i> , in 2008) Proposal for a Law on Human Mobility (<i>Proyecto de Ley de Movilidad Humana</i>) Proposal for an Organic Law on Protection and Equality of Rights of Ecuadorian Migrants Residing Abroad (<i>Ley Orgánica de Protección e Igualdad de Derechos de los Migrantes Ecuatorianos Residentes en el Exterior</i>)
El Salvador	Migration Law (in 1959) Special Law for the Protection and Development of the Salvadorian Migrant Person and his/her Family (<i>Ley Especial para la Protección y Desarrollo de la Persona Migrante Salvadoreña y su Familia</i> , in 2011) Institutional Policy of Protection and Linkage for the Migrant Salvadoreans (<i>Política Institucional de Protección y Vinculación para los Salvadoreños Migrantes</i> , in 2014)

Source: DUS (2014-2015) and websites on legislation.

Table 9: Laws and policy documents outlining diaspora policies in Latin America

Country	Relevant laws and policy documents
Guatemala	Migration Law (in 1999)
Honduras	Law on Migration and Alien Affairs (Decree N° 208, in 2003) Law on the Protection of Migrant Hondurans and their Families (<i>Ley de Protección de los Hondureños Migrantes y sus Familiares</i> , Decree N°, in 2013)
Mexico	Migration Law (in 2011) Decree creating the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (<i>Decreto por el que se crea el Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior, con el carácter de órgano administrativo desconcentrado de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, D.O.F. 16 abril 2003</i> , in 2003) Proposal for a Law on Attention to and Protection of Mexicans Abroad (<i>Proyecto de Ley de Atención y Protección de los Mexicanos en el Exterior</i>)
Nicaragua	Migration Law (N° 761, in 2011) Special Law on [Return] Migration Incentives (<i>Ley especial de Incentivos Migratorios</i> , N° 535, in 2005) Proposal for a Law on Attention to and Protection of the Nicaraguan Migrant Abroad (<i>Proyecto Ley de atención y protección al migrante nicaraguense en el exterior</i>)
Panama	Decree-Law on the National Migration Service (<i>Decreto-Ley que crea el Servicio Nacional de Migración, la Carrera Migratoria y dicta otras disposiciones</i> , in 2008)
Paraguay	Migration Law (N° 978, in 1996)
Peru	Migration Law (Legislative Decree N° 1236, in 2015) Law on the Consultative Councils of Peruvian Communities Abroad (<i>Ley de los Consejos de Consulta de las Comunidades Peruanas</i> , Law N° 29495, in 2012) Law on the Economic and Social Reinsertion of the Returned Migrant (<i>Ley de reinserción económica y social del migrante retornado</i> , N° 30001, in 2013) Resolutions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs No.1197 of 2002 and No.0687 of 2004
Uruguay	Law on Migration and Return (N° 18.250, in 2008)
Venezuela	Law on Alien Affairs and Migration (N° 37.944, in 2004) Proposal for a Law of Repatriation of Goods of Venezuelans Abroad (<i>Ley de Repatriación de Bienes de venezolanos en el exterior</i>) (or an emigrant tax, not adopted)

Source: DUS (2014-2015) and websites on legislation.

As it can be seen from *Table 9*, all Latin American countries have a specific law which usually sets the terms and conditions of entry and stay of foreign citizens and the institutional competences of the different governmental units that deal with them. Many of these laws date back to the mid-20th century and they were often conceived under a military dictatorship. This is the case with the migration laws of Brazil and Chile, for example (although there are attempts in both countries to create a more modern migration law).

New migration laws entered into force in the past 10 years in Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Uruguay, many of which make several references to the emigration and diaspora issue. Some of these countries also created specialized laws for a concrete topic within the emigration issue, the two most important being the protection of vulnerable migrant groups abroad and return migration. Some of the countries also have a law or a ministerial decree concerning the institutionalization of their Diaspora Unit: Colombia, Mexico and Peru counts with such a document (DUS 2014-2015).

There are comprehensive policy papers on an 'integral' migration policy in five countries: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and El Salvador. However, this enumeration can be misleading: Argentina's "New Argentine Migratory Policy" deals only with immigration issues, while significant countries of origin like Mexico or Peru do not count with one single document – nonetheless, they have important achievements on the policy level.

Specialized institutional bodies and their activities

Meanwhile, as of 2016, roughly half of Latin American countries still have little more achievement in the institutionalization of their diaspora-related policies than an administrative unit for visa issues for those citizens who reside abroad which sometimes issues an informative material for emigrants or prospective returnees. These countries (for example Bolivia, Panama or Paraguay) do not actively 'make policy' in institutional terms, conceiving emigration primarily as an issue of documentation and public administration.

Others already have a specialized body for diaspora communities, even if only a few countries have a separate, higher level institutional unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that deals with diaspora issues with a holistic approach. Most importantly, it is Mexico that has a large apparatus focusing on related areas, but Ecuador and El Salvador are also worth mentioning. Mexico's Institute for Mexicans Abroad (*Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior*) will be presented

in details below. Being more a paradigm shift than a simple agenda setting, institutionalization of the constant contact and assistance of a large number of citizens who live abroad have been a slow but important process in diaspora issues (Didou, 2009; Délano, 2011; Vargas, 2011).

In parallel, on the intergovernmental level, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of most Latin American countries have been dedicating increased efforts to advocate migrants' rights, with emigration becoming a basic issue in bilateral relations with the countries of destination. Cooperation with other countries of origin on international fora has been significant: most Latin American countries are signatories of the United Nations' International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW).

In *Table 10*, the specialized institutional bodies responsible for immigration and emigration/diaspora issues are shown for each Latin American country.

The largest and oldest Diaspora Unit, the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (*Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior, IME*) was created as an autonomous institution within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2000, following a landslide victory of a center-right party. Migrants' right to vote had been an issue for decades and the constitution was changed to provide Mexicans abroad with the right to vote in presidential elections at the consulates in 1997. Diaspora vote was decisive in the 2000 elections (Escobar Latapi, 2008).

Other Latin American countries also have their diaspora policy framework, although on a more moderate scale. The three Andean countries with developed institutions in this respect (Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) are worth mentioning, while Mercosur countries are not placing a real emphasis on the issue. Similar to Mexico, Peru also created its first diaspora institution after the electoral victory of a president backed by many migrant voters – Alejandro Toledo. The entity (now called General Directorate of Peruvian Communities Abroad and Consular Affairs) belongs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it administrates several programmes of human rights protection, cultural and educational vinculation and productive vinculation (Vega, 2011). Ecuador created two special units for diaspora affairs within its Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2000, which were later integrated into a ministry called Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility (Araujo and Eguiguren, 2009). Colombia experienced several waves of forced migration due to violent civil war and drug mafia activity, and in 1998 a National Plan for Integral Assistance for the Population Displaced by Violence was created, together with a special governmental fund to cover the expenses of the activities. Later, migration and diaspora issues shifted from conflict management and legal protection issues to the diaspora and development area, as also seen in the cases above with Mexico, Peru and Ecuador (Araujo and Eguiguren, 2009).

Table 10: Specialized institutional bodies responsible for immigration and emigration/diaspora issues in each Latin American country

Country	Specialized Diaspora Unit	Founded (year)	Staff (approx.)
Argentina	Directorate of Argentineans Abroad (<i>Dirección de Argentinos en el Exterior</i>), within the General Directorate of Consular Affairs (<i>Dirección General de Asuntos Consulares</i>)		7–10 employees
Bolivia			
Brazil	General Subsecretariat for Brazilians Abroad (<i>Subsecretaria-Geral das Comunidades Brasileiras no Exterior, SGEB</i>), Department for Consular Affairs and for Brazilians Abroad (<i>Departamento Consular e de Brasileiros no Exterior, DCB</i>), Division of Brazilian Communities Abroad (<i>Divisão das Comunidades Brasileiras no Exterior, DBR</i>)	The General Subsecretariat for Brazilians Abroad (SGEB) was created in 2007	Approx. 10 employees (SGEB, DCB and DBR)
Chile	Directorate for the Community of Chileans Abroad (<i>Dirección para la Comunidad de Chilenos en el Exterior, DICOEX</i>), within the General Directorate of Consular Affairs and Immigration (<i>Dirección General de Asuntos Consulares y de Inmigración, DIGECONSU</i>) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The DICOEX is divided in two Subdirectorates: of Development (<i>de Desarrollo</i>) and of Operations (<i>de Operaciones</i>)	2000	14 employees: one director, two subdirectors, one secretary, nine professional employees and an auxiliary employee
Colombia	Directorate of Consular and Migratory Affairs and Citizen Service (<i>Dirección de Asuntos Consulares, Migratorios y de Atención al Ciudadano</i>)	No data on when did the Directorate adopt the "Migratory" element in its name	Variable
Costa Rica	Directorate of External Service (<i>Dirección de Servicio Exterior</i>)	1962	20 employees
Cuba			
Dominican Republic			
Ecuador	A whole Viceministry (<i>of Human Mobility, Viceministerio de Movilidad Humana</i>) is in charge of the diaspora affairs. In the other half of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<i>the Cancillería</i>), there are also related units, such as the Directorate of Travel Documents (<i>Dirección de Documentos de Viaje</i>), the Subsecretariat of the Ecuadorian Migrant Community (<i>Subsecretaria de la Comunidad Ecuatoriana Migrante</i>), the Directorate of Consular Affairs (<i>Dirección de Asuntos Consulares</i>), etc.	The National Secretariat of the Migrant (Secretaría Nacional del Migrante, SENAMI) was merged into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2013 and now it is called the Viceministry of Human Mobility	Variable

Source: DUS [(2014-2015)] and website of each institution.

Table 10: Specialized institutional bodies responsible for immigration and emigration/diaspora issues in each Latin American country

Country	Specialized Diaspora Unit	Founded (year)	Staff (approx.)
El Salvador			
Guatemala	General Directorate of Consular and Migratory Affairs (<i>Dirección General de Asuntos Consulares y Migratorios</i>)	2003, by enhancing the scope of action of the Directorate of Consular Affairs	37 employees
Honduras			
Mexico	Institute of Mexicans Abroad (<i>Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior, IME</i>)	2000	46 employees plus one special consular employee at every consulate
Nicaragua			
Panama			
Paraguay			
Peru	General Directorate of Peruvian Communities Abroad and Consular Affairs (<i>Dirección General de Comunidades Peruanas en el Exterior y Asuntos Consulares</i>)		
Uruguay	Directorate of Linkages (<i>Dirección de Vinculación</i>), but other units are also involved, such as the Office of Return and Welcome (<i>Oficina de Retorno y Bienvenida</i>), the Office of Assistance to the Compatriot (<i>Oficina de Asistencia al Compatriota</i>) or the Centre of Citizen Service, all of which are in daily contact with the Directorate of Linkages	The Directorate of Linkages was created in 2005, before which it was the Directorate of Consular Affairs that had been in charge of the issue	There are 3 employees at the Directorate of Linkages
Venezuela			

Source: DUS [(2014-2015)] and website of each institution.

Other Latin American countries also have their diaspora policy framework, although on a more moderate scale. The three Andean countries with developed institutions in this respect (Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) are worth mentioning, while Mercosur countries are not placing a real emphasis on the issue. Similar to Mexico, Peru also created its first diaspora institution after the electoral victory of a president backed by many migrant voters – Alejandro Toledo. The entity (now called General Directorate of Peruvian Communities Abroad and Consular

Affairs) belongs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it administrates several programmes of human rights protection, cultural and educational vinculation and productive vinculation (Vega, 2011). Ecuador created two special units for diaspora affairs within its Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2000, which were later integrated into a ministry called Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility (Araujo and Eguiguren, 2009). Colombia experienced several waves of forced migration due to violent civil war and drug mafia activity, and in 1998 a National Plan for Integral Assistance for the Population Displaced by Violence was created, together with a special governmental fund to cover the expenses of the activities. Later, migration and diaspora issues shifted from conflict management and legal protection issues to the diaspora and development area, as also seen in the cases above with Mexico, Peru and Ecuador (Araujo and Eguiguren, 2009).

Three out of the five Mercosur countries (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay) and Chile also have a specialized body within their Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Argentina, it is called the Directorate of Argentines Abroad. It focuses on the repatriation of the highly skilled, or those who face economic, social or health difficulties and they apply for this voluntary return with government assistance. Other Mercosur countries have also concentrated on these two issues, and thus Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela also have programmes for the highly skilled, as does Chile. However, there is no special focus on the remittance-sending 'average' migrant workers in any of these countries (Buirá, 2006). Finally, small Central American countries usually do not have the governmental capacities to pursue an active diaspora policy, but in some cases the diaspora organizes itself to the extent that they 'reach out' to their country of origin, as in the case of El Salvador (Nosthas, 2006).

Regarding their activities, Diaspora Units are the central elements in giving shape to the political and social ambitions towards an active governmental approach to the affairs of the diaspora. Nonetheless, it is clear that their staff size and their organizational role do not enable them to deal with all relevant issue related to the diaspora. Or, better said, they can *deal with* them, but they cannot *resolve* every problem on their own. Hence, there is a necessity to work together with other governmental entities that might have a different profile and focus, but which are also involved in the broader topic of migration.

Understood therefore as central but not exclusive actors of diaspora policymaking, Diaspora Units are 1) pursuing their own activities as specialized units within the respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contributing to the successful operation of the foreign service towards the diaspora (through the central office and through the consulates), and 2) coordinating the diaspora-related work of other governmental bodies (ministries, specialized institutions, etc.).

In the DUS (2014-2015), Diaspora Unit respondents mentioned a wide range of activities that they usually develop. However, given the fact that many times their activities are embedded in the work of the Department of Consular Affairs, within which they operate, a significant share of their activities is the same as any consular department would undertake: assisting citizens who got in trouble abroad, identity document procedures, visa procedures, public notary procedures, legal assistance, etc. There is a focus on vulnerable groups, victims of aggression or subjects to deportation in the case of some Diaspora Units, for example the Ecuadorian one (DUS Ecuador, 2014). On other occasions, Diaspora Units provide specific help for the consulates in providing them with common material and know-how on how to negotiate with the country of destination on specific issues, for example concerning bilateral agreements on social security and mutual recognition of titles and professional habilitation documents (DUS Brazil, 2014).

Besides their *own* activities, however, Diaspora Units also act as the coordinators of many other programmes or policies. This is stressed by the fact that many of these Diaspora Units also operate as the permanent background institution for the regular coordination mechanisms between the respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the other relevant institutional actors. For example, this is the case of Chile's Directorate for the Communities of Chileans Abroad (DICOEX), which has the function of the Technical Secretariat of the Interministerial Committee for the Chilean Community Abroad (DUS Chile, 2014).

Of all Latin American countries, Mexico has by far the largest number of institutionalized programmes for diaspora affairs. A wide range of programmes exists in the country, aiming at maintaining the physical and cultural integrity of migrants, providing information about their rights and obligations, promoting and assuring education for migrant children and youth who have studied both in Mexico and the United States, aiming at a high quality, or offering access to healthcare at the place of origin, during the migratory process and at the place of destination. Coordination of these different programmes is made by the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (*Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero, IME*) (DUS Mexico, 2015).

In other countries, main fields of activities might be similar, although not as developed as in the case of Mexico. Ecuador, for example, has many programmes focusing on communication and return migration. The latter include programmes of education at distance (with the Ministry of Education), repatriation of sick emigrants (*Programa Voy por Ti*, with the Ministry of Health), real estate bonds (*Bono de la vivienda*, with the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing) etc. Others, such as

Uruguay focus on the highly qualified emigrants, having programmes such as the “I am Uruguay” (*Soy Uruguay*) programme for knowledge networks in the diaspora, and the Circulation Programme for Highly Qualified Uruguayans (*Programa de Circulación de Uruguayos Altamente Capacitados, CUAC*).

To sum up, Diaspora Units operate and coordinate a wide range of development-related activities which have already had a significant institutional and project-level history.

EVALUATION

Main findings on the importance of the diaspora and the overall development level (as correlating variables) and effectiveness of governance (as an inversely correlating variable) are shown on the left side of *Table 11*. These follow the categorizations of *Tables 4, 5* and *6*, respectively. For every category shown in the table mentioned, a number is assigned, in line with the previous logical assessment of the potential effects of belonging to a given category on the conditions and capabilities for creating effective diaspora policies. In other words, 0 is assigned for the options which promise low level of diaspora policymaking (high level of development, ineffective governance, low economic importance of the diaspora), 2 for the opposites of these three stances, and 1 for the intermediate categories. Obviously, one of these three values is very likely to be an opposite of the other two, therefore medium stances might mean higher importance of migration but lower capacities for policymaking, or the other way round. Scores from these three features are summed up in a ‘Score B’ where B stands for ‘background’.

On the right hand side of *Table 11*, there are the main findings regarding the actual achievements in diaspora policymaking. ‘Citizenship and vote’ makes a reference to the overall restrictiveness or liberal stance of a country concerning dual citizenship and the right to vote of the diaspora (as summarized in *Table 8*), with 2 points being assigned to the liberal stance, 0 to the restrictive and 1 to the intermediate positions. ‘Laws’ refer to the complexity of legal and policy framework of the diaspora issue (see *Table 9*, i. e. specialized laws and decrees; and policy documents are both worth 1-1 point), while ‘Institutions’ stand for the institutional framework (as presented in *Table 10*) in which a ‘smaller’ Diaspora Unit is coded as 1 point and a larger, or institutionally more autonomous unit (Institute, Viceministry) is coded as 2 points. The total of these three columns is summed up in a ‘Score A’ where A stands for ‘achievements’.

Table 11 therefore summarizes all main findings of the analysis:

Table 11: Background for diaspora policies and changes in diaspora policies compared

	Develop- ment	Govern- ance	Diaspora Imp.	Score B	Citizen- ship, vote	Laws	Institu- tions	ScoreA	Match
Argentina	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	+
Bolivia	2	0	1	3	1	0	0	1	-
Brazil	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0
Chile	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	1	0
Colombia	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	4	x
Costa Rica	1	2	1	4	1	1	0	2	-
Cuba	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	-
Dominican R	1	1	2	4	2	0	0	2	-
Ecuador	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	5	+
El Salvador	2	1	2	5	1	2	2	5	x
Guatemala	2	1	2	5	1	0	0	1	-
Honduras	2	0	2	4	1	1	0	2	-
Mexico	1	2	1	4	2	1	2	5	x
Nicaragua	2	0	2	4	1	1	0	2	-
Panama	1	2	1	4	1	0	0	1	-
Paraguay	2	0	1	3	1	0	0	1	-
Peru	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	x
Uruguay	0	2	0	2	1	0	1	2	0
Venezuela	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0

Source: Own compilation. Values are based on *Tables 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10*.

The far right column of *Table 11* is titled as 'Match' because it evaluates how Scores A and B for each country are related. Coding is as follows:

- 0 0 or 1 points of difference, low score (0-3)
- x 0 or 1 points of difference, high score (4-6)
- More than 1 points of difference, A is lower than B
- + More than 1 points of difference, A is higher than B

These four categories can be translated into the following categories:

- o It was expected that these countries will have a lower level of institutionalization of diaspora policies because the issue is not so relevant for them, and the expectations turned out to be correct. These countries are: Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela.
- x It was expected that these countries will have a higher level of institutionalization of diaspora policies because the issue is very relevant for them, and the expectations turned out to be correct. These countries are: Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru.
- These countries have a lower level of institutionalization of diaspora policies than could have been expected based on the importance of their diaspora. These countries are: Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay.
- + These countries have a higher level of institutionalization of diaspora policies than it could have been expected based on the importance of their diaspora. These countries are: Argentina and Ecuador.

The interesting feature in the above grouping is that the first three categories largely overlap with the three profiles set up in *Table 7*. Pattern 1 in *Table 7* is almost the same as the country group marked with O in *Table 11*. Pattern 2 overlaps with the X group, and pattern 3 with the - group. The two controversial members of pattern 4 and the two 'over-achievers' of the + group are different.

What does this demonstrate? Basically, it shows that the patterns identified regarding the background of diaspora affairs are more or less the same as the patterns of institutional achievements in legal and policy matters about the diaspora. There are countries which could do a lot but are not interested (Pattern 1, mark O), countries for which the topic is important and they have done a lot (Pattern 2, mark X) and countries for which the topic is important but they could not achieve too much (Pattern 3, mark -).

CONCLUSION

While many Latin American countries face the challenges of mass emigration, it is not necessarily the most affected countries that have the most developed policy responses. This article has shown that:

- There is a group of countries with high emigration rate but with low governmental capacities (e.g. Bolivia, Honduras) where no significant diaspora institutions and policies were created.
- Another group of countries shows sufficient government capacities, but the emigration issue is not seen as very relevant there, thus diaspora policy institutions and policies are also lacking – or they were created only for specific groups, such as the highly skilled emigrants (e.g. Brazil, Chile).
- Finally, a group of countries with medium to high emigration rate and medium governmental capacities created the most innovative and robust diaspora institutions and policies (e.g. Mexico, Ecuador).

As stated in the introduction, this study on Latin American diaspora institutions did not engage in cross-regional comparisons. However, it can be understood as a point of reference for scholars and policymakers in Hungary and the Central and South Eastern European region as well. While the basic differences between the two regions should be assessed from the perspective of their effects on migration patterns, migration legislation and spaces for independent policymaking, emigration trends in Central and South Eastern Europe show many parallel features to those of Latin America, and institutional or policy solutions might also be similar. I consider that a comparative analysis of Latin American and Central and South Eastern European diaspora policy settings and solutions would be a very fruitful path for further research.

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