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Do Diaspora Engagement Policies Endure? An Update of the Emigrant Policies Index (EMIX) to 2017

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Abstract

How states of origin regulate the rights, obligations, and services they extend to their emigrants has remained mostly in the shadows of migration policy research. We have tackled this gap in the literature by advancing the Emigrant Policies Index (EMIX), which was designed for comparing the degree of adoption of emigrant policies – also called ‘diaspora-engagement policies’ – across countries in a whole region and, with the update provided in this paper, for the first time in a longitudinal direction. Having previously introduced the EMIX in a synchronic frame, this article presents its scores for 14 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2015 and 2017. This effort already shows that some emigrant policies (e.g. citizenship policies) endure more than others (e.g. social policies). These suggestive findings support the need to compile not only cross-national, but also longitudinal datasets on these policies.

Policy implications

- Emigration is not a loss for states of origin. Documenting and comparing more than a hundred programs for emigrants across countries, the EMIX shows the amplitude of efforts by states of origin to channel and encourage emigrant participation. While other researchers have abundantly shown that emigrants keep participating in their societies of origin by sending money and making political claims from abroad, our research suggests that states of origin encourage linkages also in social and cultural domains.
- Designing good emigrant policies will not suffice if there are no administrations to support them. To reduce window-dressing and implementation gaps in the realm of emigrant policies, states of origin must develop administrative structures both at home and abroad (e.g. by improving their consular networks).
- Across countries, migration policies should not be analyzed only from the perspective of states of reception, but also from that of states of origin. The reason for this is that emigrant policies can be a key to the integration of emigrants in states of reception. We need to learn more about how emigrant policies and integration and immigration policies interact.
- Most academic work on migration policies focuses on observing, measuring, and comparing immigrant inclusion and integration policies. The study and evaluation of emigrant policies still needs to catch up with the level of refinement in data collection and analysis on the immigration policy side. To close this gap, governments, international organizations, and researchers must devote more human and financial resources to the collection of longitudinal data on emigrant policies for many countries and across regions.

1. Emigrant policies as a field of migration policy

The adoption in 2011 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the instrument designed under the United Nations to improve cooperation on international migration, included numerous suggestions regarding policies that states of origin can adopt to connect with their non-resident citizens. Among very diverse recommendations, which

range from creating mechanisms to foster remote political participation to the improvement of remittance channels (UN, 2018), the Global Compact fortifies a continued promotion of emigrant (or diaspora-engagement) policies as a tool of migration governance in the last decade (Agunias et al. 2012; Haas, 2006; IOM, 2013; OECD, 2012, 2015).

Prior to this, however, the forms and means by which states reach out to their nationals beyond borders were

already the object of passionate debate among researchers. While some argue that emigrant policies appear mostly in a symbolic realm of identity-construction, or as tokenistic policies to show care for diasporas (Smith, 2008; Wise, 2004), others argue that they are instruments for the state's transnational mobilization for homegrown political agendas (Adamson, 2016; Margheritis, 2016; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2016; Ragazzi 2008; Smith, 2003) or access to resources of emigrants (Escobar, 2007; Leblang, 2017). However, others see them through a darker lens as tools of control and extraction to support and finance domestic political takeovers or geopolitical maneuvers (Gamlen, 2019; Hirt and Mohammad, 2018; Pogonyi, 2015). Slowly, a realization has grown that stipulates that, behind the positive or neutral-sounding rhetoric of governance, engagement, and inclusion of diasporas, emigrant policies have complex, diverse agendas.

Still, it has been hard to disentangle the complexity of emigrant policies because the few existing comparative exercises that exist have imposed a theoretical construct on different bundles of emigrant policies for varying cases around the world, producing suggestive explanatory analyses, but with limited external validity. We found it imperative to first develop a rigorous conceptualization of 'emigrant policies' and, second, to exhaustively screen all policies that fit such a conceptualization. That is the main contribution of the Emigrant Policies Index (EMIX), published in 2017, which allows researchers and practitioners to compare the degree of adoption of 102 emigrant policies aggregated to compose 12 dimensions (Pedroza and Palop-García, 2017). Such a bottom-up, comprehensive survey of emigrant policies covering nearly all countries in one world region had been missing in the academic debate.

This article builds on that previous study (Pedroza and Palop-García, 2017) but aims to bring the scholarly and policy communities one step further in understanding emigrant policies as a *field of migration policy* that should be analyzed and compared across cases and throughout time with the same empirical refinement that immigrant and integration policies are analyzed nowadays. We push the EMIX forward by comparing the scores for the overall adoption of emigrant policies, as well as concrete changes in particular dimensions across a sample of 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries in two years: 2015 and 2017. This is the first study of such a wide range of emigrant policies for a world region across years. The key contribution of this paper thus is not just the comparative scope, but the rigorous application of the same tools of observation to analyze continuity and change in an area of migration policy making for which such methodological refinement has been lacking.

The selection of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) as a region and of these two years is intentional. Not only has LAC had significant emigration in the past three decades (Donato et al. 2010), but several countries in this region have been identified as main innovators of emigrant policies by area specialists (Délano, 2013, 2014; Itzigsohn and Villacrés, 2008) and by comparativists (Ragazzi, 2014). For instance, in providing institutional access to undocumented

migrants through innovative documentation, or offering them extensive health services in the reception country, or devising co-development programs at home, too. Moreover, LAC, as a region, is a pioneer in policies fundamental to emigrants' capacity to live transnational lives, and in the acceptance of emigrant dual nationality (Vink et al. 2019).

While the two years studied may not appear to be far enough apart to observe longitudinal change, we want to stress that, precisely because of the novelty of these policies, momentous changes took place in the migration frameworks of several countries selected in the study between 2015 and 2017. In 2016, for instance, Guatemala passed a new Migration Code that addressed the rights of emigrants and redesigned the administrative setting dedicated to the coordination of migration policy. Brazil approved a new Migration Law in 2017 that rearranged its emigrant policies. We will go into more depth in the paper about the migration policy overhaul in Ecuador since 2016. Beyond such concrete amendments in migration policy frameworks, nine states in the sample underwent major political changes involving party alternation in their chief executives between 2015 and 2017: Argentina, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago.

In a new field of study, the result of the methodological drive to produce explanatory studies before solid descriptive studies have established conceptual standards is that, as Margheritis noted in 2016, we have no conclusive evidence yet as to what kind of countries devise what kinds of emigrant policies. What is more, we will not have such conclusive evidence unless we contribute to the line of comparative, longitudinal research that she opened.

Our findings allow the policy and academic communities to start evaluating whether emigrant policies are mere symbolic policies that decay as migration schemes or politicians change, or if, on the contrary, they are becoming an integral part of Latin American and Caribbean states. If the academic and policy communities come together and nurture longitudinal datasets like this one for longer periods, we will be able to conduct analyses that explain *when* and *why* states adopt *which* emigrant policies. For instance, which emigrant policies are prone to change when countries undergo harsh political or economic turns (e.g. as in Argentina or Venezuela in the last decade). So far, such causal comparative analysis is only possible through meticulous case or small-N comparative studies (Délano, 2011; Margheritis, 2016), but we want to make the case that cross-sectional, longitudinal data will allow rigorous larger-N analyses, too.

In summation, the purpose of this article is to demonstrate the potential use of the EMIX to analyze longitudinal data on the degree of adoption of emigrant policies across countries. Our concrete research question emphasizes the push we aim to give to this research undertaking: Is there continuity regarding the adopted emigrant policies between 2015 and 2017? We devote the next section of the article to briefly present the state of the art to which this study contributes.

2. State of the art

It is apparent that, in the complex landscape of migration policy studies, most of what is written deals with immigrants and their inclusion (Solano & Huddleston, this issue). For the most part, widely comparative studies on policies that states of origin devise for their emigrant citizens have remained a blind spot. Recently, however, the mushrooming of case, comparative-case, and large-N comparative studies on emigrant policies clearly demonstrates that this is a relevant area of global policy making. The comparative and typological works on emigrant policies by Ragazzi (2009, 2014), Gamlen (2006, 2008, 2013), and Østergaard-Nielsen (2016) divided states into neat models of diaspora engagement on the base of cross-sectional data and opened the door to a new development of literature on emigrant policies.

Case and comparative-case study analyses have demonstrated that the range of policies targeting emigrants is multidimensional and includes education; labor policies; financial and psychological counselling; and language and skills acquisition to help emigrants better fit into the receiving state's labor market and even fulfill the requirements of naturalization for a full formal integration into its society (Délano, 2011, 2018; Délano and Mylonas, 2017; Naujoks, 2012; Pedroza et al., 2016; Ragazzi 2008). This diversity and complexity make emigrant policies both interesting and important, but the rationales hypothesized in different studies to make sense of such a diverse and complex array of policies are hardly comparable to the approaches that have been adopted for immigrant integration policies, which often aim to identify inclusive/integrative policies. Clearly, not all emigrant policies seek to be inclusive or integrative. Even despite the low popularity of publishing negative results, some case-studies provide evidence of states that give minimal attention to emigrants and, if anything, devise policies to deprive their citizens of rights after they emigrate (Hoffmann, 2010; Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2017; Reis, 2007).

Going for a moment back to the pioneers in this field, it is intriguing that Luin Goldring (2002, p. 64) understood emigrant policies as constitutive of state-led transnationalism, defining them as 'institutionalized national policies and programs that attempt to expand the scope of national state's political, economic, social, and moral regulations to include emigrants and their descendants outside the national territory'. Goldring's definition seems to assume that emigrant policies undergo institutionalization, but nearly two decades after the publication of her text, we have no data to assert this. When it comes to the vast array of emigrant policies that exist across states, some seem to appear and disappear, just as the units to design, inform, and implement them change in hierarchy and scope (on this, see Gamlen, 2019). Narrating the progression of emigrant policies across several cases in South America, Margheritis (2016, p. 192) stated that:

[S]tates' commitment to deepen engagement with emigrants seems contingent on a policy making

plagued by tensions. [...] lack of coordination, frequent turnabout of public officials and political appointees, and intrastate disputes are a constant and are certainly detrimental to policy consistency and sustainability over time.

While both cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses are well established for immigration and immigrant integration policies, this is not the case for emigrant policies. Only comparative longitudinal works including a broad range of policies will give us a clearer idea of which emigrant policies are robust enough to endure different political environments, and which are symbolic, fleeting artifacts of shifting governments. By presenting a methodological tool to conduct longitudinal studies, this article pushes the scholarly and policy communities a small step forward in addressing this research gap. If we can prove that the EMIX is not only useful to draw comparisons across countries, but also sensitive enough to capture changes across time, even within a short period, we will have also demonstrated the validity and robustness of the index and paved the way for future research efforts.

3. The Emigrant Policies Index (EMIX)

The Emigrant Policies Index (EMIX) measures the degree of adoption of emigrant policies. Under the operational definition of 'emigrant policies', it covers any kind of policy that states develop to establish a new relation towards, or keep the links with, their emigrants (Pedroza and Palop-García, 2017). For the EMIX, 'emigrants' are considered those people 'who have left their country of origin, be it because they reside abroad or because they are in transit journey, with or without travel documents, and also those who, by virtue of their belonging to an emigrant community (...) could claim citizenship/nationality, even if they do not have it presently' (Pedroza and Palop-García, 2017, p. 168). The EMIX aims at being a descriptive tool and it should not be interpreted in a normative logic (i.e. it does not inform which policy mix is better or more desirable). In addition, the EMIX measures the adoption of policies and not their implementation and, following the example of other migration indices (e.g. Immigration Policies in Comparison [IMPIC] or Migrant Integration Policy Index), it focuses on policy outputs, not outcomes (Hollifield, 1986).

3.1. The EMIX components

The EMIX comprises components, subcomponents, and attributes that are organized hierarchically and designed to avoid conflation and redundancy (Pedroza and Palop-García, 2017). The items that compose the EMIX have been selected based on a review of the previous literature on diaspora engagement policies (case studies and other previous comparative efforts). The EMIX has two main components: policies (POLICIES) and administration (ADMINISTRATION).

The first component, POLICIES, reflects the policies adopted by states that we aggregated into eight dimensions

(or subcomponents): citizenship policies, electoral rights, institutional consultation, external obligations, economic policies, social policies, political competition abroad, and cultural policies.¹

The second component, ADMINISTRATION, captures the structural capabilities of states of origin to put emigrant policies into practice and has two subcomponents: the home administration setting and the administration deployed abroad (see Table 1 for a list of the items included in each subcomponent; for an extensive overview of the EMIX framework, see online Appendix S1).² Although the EMIX does not aim to measure the appropriate degree of administration that emigrant policies require (as this may depend, among other factors, on diaspora size, dispersion and how efficiently resources are organized, and a normative scale that we do not employ), we include administration as a component because clearly *some* administration is needed to put words to deeds and dispel the claim made in wide comparative studies that diaspora institutions appear to be mostly window dressing (Gamlen, 2019).

Table 1 presents the components and dimensions (or sub-components) and the next level of disaggregation.

3.2. Data sources

The empirical analysis of the study compares two iterations of the EMIX. The first captures the degree of adoption of emigrant policies in the region as of the end of 2015, and the second captures the degree of adoption of the policies as of the end of 2017. The procedure to gather and process the information was identical: first, through desk research based on reliable authoritative sources of information, a centralized team specifically trained to research emigrant policies filled out a questionnaire comprising qualitative questions that covered all the items included in the EMIX framework. Primary sources (e.g. laws, administrative regulations) were given priority; secondary sources and experts were consulted for confirmation only. Second, the team used a codebook to transform the information collected in the questionnaires with the descriptions of the policies included in the EMIX framework into 102 quantitative indicators.

3.3. Coding

The items, attributes, subcomponents, and components of the EMIX range from 0 to 1. Most of the items use a dummy 0/1 scale or an ordinal scale with more than two options. To avoid potential problems caused by the combination of different measurement levels, we identified for each of the indicators the theoretical minimum and the theoretical maximum. Although the exact interpretation of the scales varies for each of the indicators, in general, the existence of a given policy is coded as 1 and the lack of policy as 0. Each country was coded by two different coders. The codes were later compared, and the discrepancies found were resolved by the core research team. This process allowed us to decrease measurement error and to ensure a high coding reliability.

Table 1. Emigrant policy dimensions covered in the EMIX 2015–17.

Component	Subcomponent	Items
POLICIES	Citizenship policy	Dual nationality for emigrants allowed
		Loss of nationality if residence abroad
	Suffrage	Citizen rights suspended if residence abroad
		Active voting rights for emigrants
	Regulation of political competition	Passive voting rights for emigrants
		Regulation of party offices abroad, campaigns abroad, and party membership open for emigrants or not
	Institutional participation	Existence and characteristics of consultative bodies to represent emigrants at national and consular level
		Existence of programs to attract remittances
	Economic policies	Existence of programs to attract investment
		Return policies
Obligations	Brain circulation networks	
	Military service for emigrants	
Social policies	Social service for emigrants	
	Taxes applied specifically to emigrants	
Cultural policies	Retirement benefits available after emigration	
	Access to healthcare services for emigrants	
ADMINISTRATION	External Administration	Education programs for emigrants
		Cultural programs specifically for emigrants
Home Administration	External Administration	New consular functions: psychological, financial consultancy, etc.
		Size and dispersion of consular network across countries
Home Administration	Home Administration	Extension of consular services beyond regular services: mobile consulates, weekend working hours and online services.
		Existence and rank of bureaucratic agency in charge of emigrant policies

Source: Own elaboration based on the EMIX dataset.

3.4. Aggregations, weights, and measurement levels

Throughout the different aggregation stages, ordinal indicators were combined to generate interval scales. Two consecutive steps build the composite EMIX scores. In the first step, subcomponents were aggregated to calculate the POLICIES and ADMINISTRATION components. In the second step, the two components were combined to calculate the final EMIX score. Aggregations were done using arithmetic means with different weights for each of the components and subcomponents (for further information about aggregation, weights, and measurement levels, see Pedroza and Palop-García, 2017 and online Appendices S2 and S3).³

3.5. Sample

In this article, we present the data for 14 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay. The sample covers most of South America and Central America, as well as two countries (Trinidad and Tobago and Dominican Republic) that, based on the first EMIX iteration (2015), we consider to be illustrative of emigrant policies in the Caribbean.

4. Findings

The analysis that we present in this section is twofold: first, we show the results regarding the degree of adoption of emigrant policies in the region in the two years observed, per components and per subcomponents. Second, we show more specifically the direction of the changes across policy subcomponents dimensions for the 14 countries between 2015 and 2017. We conclude this section with an illustration of the real significance of the changes observed in one country.

4.1. Comparing EMIX 2015 and 2017

Figure 1 shows the comparison of the total EMIX scores between the two years of the analysis. The score ranges from 0 to 1, 0 meaning that the given country has not adopted any of the policies included in the EMIX framework, and 1 indicating that it has adopted all the policies. Overall, the aggregate EMIX score for the region has remained constant: in 2017, the average EMIX score for the sample of countries included in the analysis was 0.43 ($\sigma = 0.1$), while in 2015, it was 0.45 ($\sigma = 0.12$). It is possible to observe decreases in the scores of some countries (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay), as well as small increases in others (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Mexico). Interestingly, only Brazil experienced a relevant decrease (0.14 points of the EMIX score) between 2015 and 2017. Country rank positions have remained nonetheless stable. In 2017, Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Peru remained well below the regional average (with

scores of 0.21, 0.36, 0.38, and 0.36 respectively) as in 2015, while Mexico, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Colombia remain above the sample average (0.62, 0.55, 0.49, and 0.51 respectively).

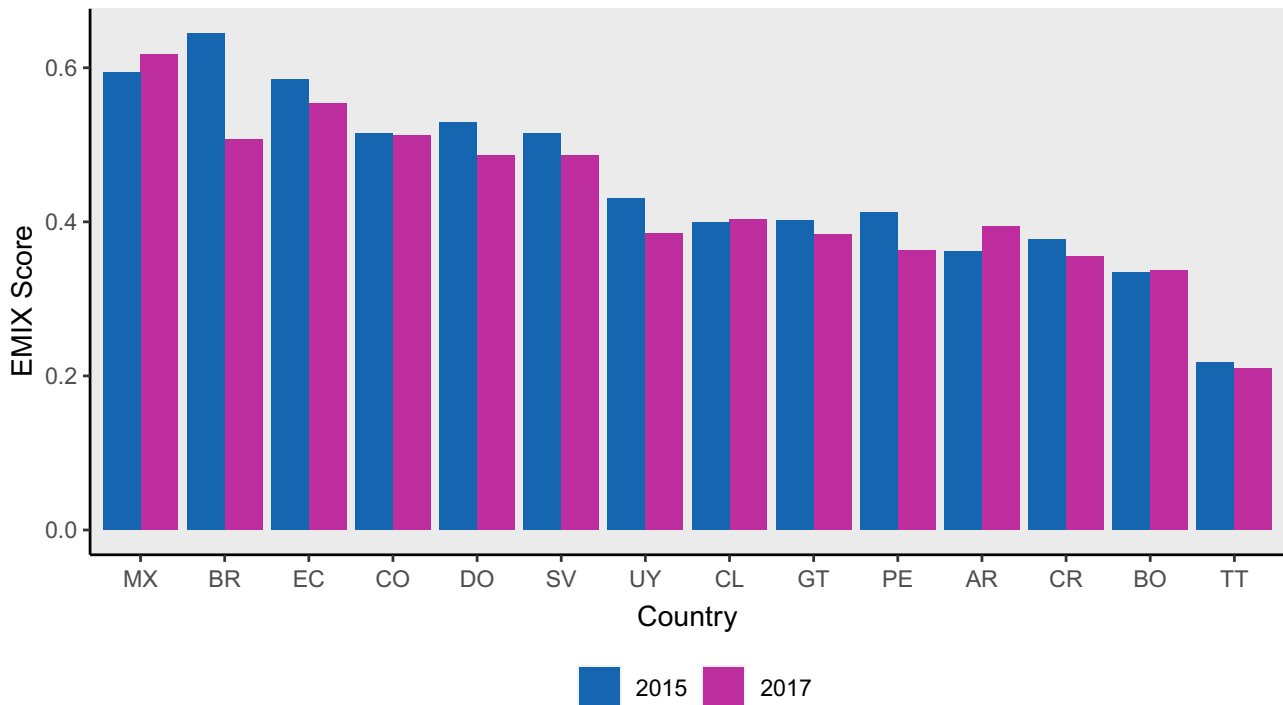
Figure 2 shows the aggregate scores for POLICIES and ADMINISTRATION. The POLICIES scores range from 0 to 1, with 0 meaning that a country has adopted none of the dimensions included within the component (i.e. citizenship, suffrage, social policy, economic policy, cultural policy, institutional participation, and political competition), and 1 that it has adopted all of the programs measured for each of these policy dimensions. As for the total EMIX score, the sample average for this component decreased between 2015 and 2017 (from a sample mean of 0.49, $\sigma = 0.1$, to a sample mean of 0.45, $\sigma = 0.09$). Two main trends arose when observing Figure 2: there are countries that remained constant (i.e. without significant changes) between years (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago), and there are countries, such as Brazil (from 0.66 in 2015 to 0.45 in 2017), Colombia (from 0.6 to 0.49), Costa Rica (from 0.43 to 0.32), and Uruguay (from 0.55 to 0.43), that show a large drop in their POLICIES score in only two years.

The second component of the index, ADMINISTRATION, also ranges from 0 to 1: 0 means that a given country lacks an administration agency in the homeland to deal with emigrant policies and has a scarcely developed consular network; 1 shows that a country has an internal administration dedicated to emigrant affairs placed at the highest level of the government hierarchy, and that the country has an extensive consular network. As Figure 2 shows, the differences between 2015 and 2017 are higher for ADMINISTRATION (sample mean in 2017 = 0.38, $\sigma = 0.2$; sample mean in 2015 = 0.35, $\sigma = 0.2$) than for POLICIES. In addition, it is possible to observe a greater variance regarding evolution patterns in time. There are countries that had a slightly lower score in 2017 than in 2015 (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, El Salvador, and Trinidad and Tobago), countries with a much lower score in 2017 (Guatemala and Peru), countries with a slightly higher score in 2017 (Brazil and Dominican Republic), and countries with a noteworthy improvement of their administrative setting dedicated to emigrant policies as compared to 2015 (Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Uruguay).

4.2. Regional adoption of the policy subcomponents

Figure 3 shows the evolution of each of the policies dimensions that compose the EMIX framework between 2015 and 2017. The scores range from 0, which means the non-adoption of the policy by any of the countries in the sample, to 1 which indicates the adoption of the policy by all the countries. Overall, there are no major changes regarding the most- and least-adopted policies. Despite a slight setback, citizenship policies and social policies remain the most widespread policies in the region (with an average score in 2017 of 0.84 and 0.48, respectively). Interestingly, social

Figure 1. EMIX total scores (2015 and 2017)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EMIX dataset.

policy remained the second-most developed policy at the regional level, suggesting the importance of emigrant policies in this realm in LAC. On the opposite side of the spectrum, institutional participation and obligations are the least-adopted policies (0.11 and 0.24 average score in 2017, respectively). The dimensions for which an increase of policies can be observed are the economic (from 0.44 in 2015 to 0.45 in 2017), electoral (from 0.33 in 2015 to 0.37 in 2017), and political competition (from 0.38 in 2015 to 0.45 in 2017).

Regarding the dimensions of the ADMINISTRATION component, there is an extension of home administrations (from an average score of 0.41 in 2015 to 0.52 in 2017) in the region, and a slight decrease in external administrations (from an average score of 0.32 in 2015 to 0.28 in 2017). Nonetheless, the changes are too small to suggest a change in the overall development of administrative settings dedicated to emigrant policies in the region.

4.3. Comparison at the subcomponent level

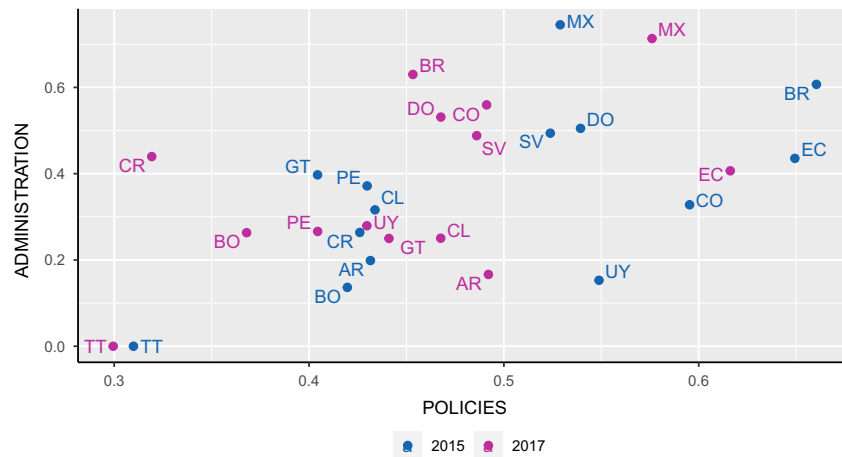
Figure 4 shows the policy changes that have occurred at the dimension level of the index. The columns represent the ten policy dimensions that compose the EMIX, and the rows show the countries included in the sample. The values range from -1 to 1 . Negative values, represented in shades of purple, indicate a negative policy change (namely, that the policy has disappeared altogether in a country or that the regulations of an existing policy have decayed). Positive

values, represented with shades of blue, indicate a positive policy change; either an adoption of a new policy or the expansion of an existing policy. An example of the adoption of a new policy could be the enactment and/or regulation of external voting in a country where this was not present in 2015. This is the case of Chile, where the constitutional reform to allow external voting was enacted in 2014, but the regulation needed to articulate the new external electoral rights only passed in 2016. An example for the expansion of a policy would be, for example, the extension of external suffrage for new types of elections (e.g. not only presidential, but also parliamentary elections).

Figure 4 only illustrates policy changes between 2015 and 2017. Thus, comparisons across countries based on this graph ought to be avoided. The figure is still helpful to compare across dimensions of policies and identify trends in the region regarding policy changes. Figure 4 reveals dynamism in most of the countries in the sample, either by removing or adopting new policies. There are, however, four dimensions that stand out for being more stable (in Figure 4, most cells colored in white or light blue/purple): citizenship policies,⁴ institutional consultation, obligations,⁵ and home administration. Also, there are policies that show an expansive trend (electoral rights⁶ and home administration), while others show a shrinking tendency (social policies and cultural policies).

Although the aim of this paper has been to demonstrate the importance of comparing emigrant policies across countries, we want to close this section by illustrating the

Figure 2. EMIX components (2015 and 2017)



Source: Own elaboration based on the EMIX dataset. Blue points show the score for 2015 and purple points the scores for 2017.

potential relevance of the longitudinal component of the analysis. While we cannot introduce a case study here (because case studies address a particular kind of question and research strategy), making a brief reference to the changes occurring in Ecuador can illustrate just how substantively important it is to consider changes in a span of only two years in this novel area of migration policy making.

For more than a decade, Ecuador had been radically transforming its emigrant policies from almost total neglect to becoming one of the main innovators in the region (Margheritis, 2011), and even worldwide, as it implemented the closest that any contemporary nation-state has come to an open borders regime (Freier and Holloway, 2019; Pugh, 2017). For our purposes here, however, it is vital to see what this entailed for emigrant policies.

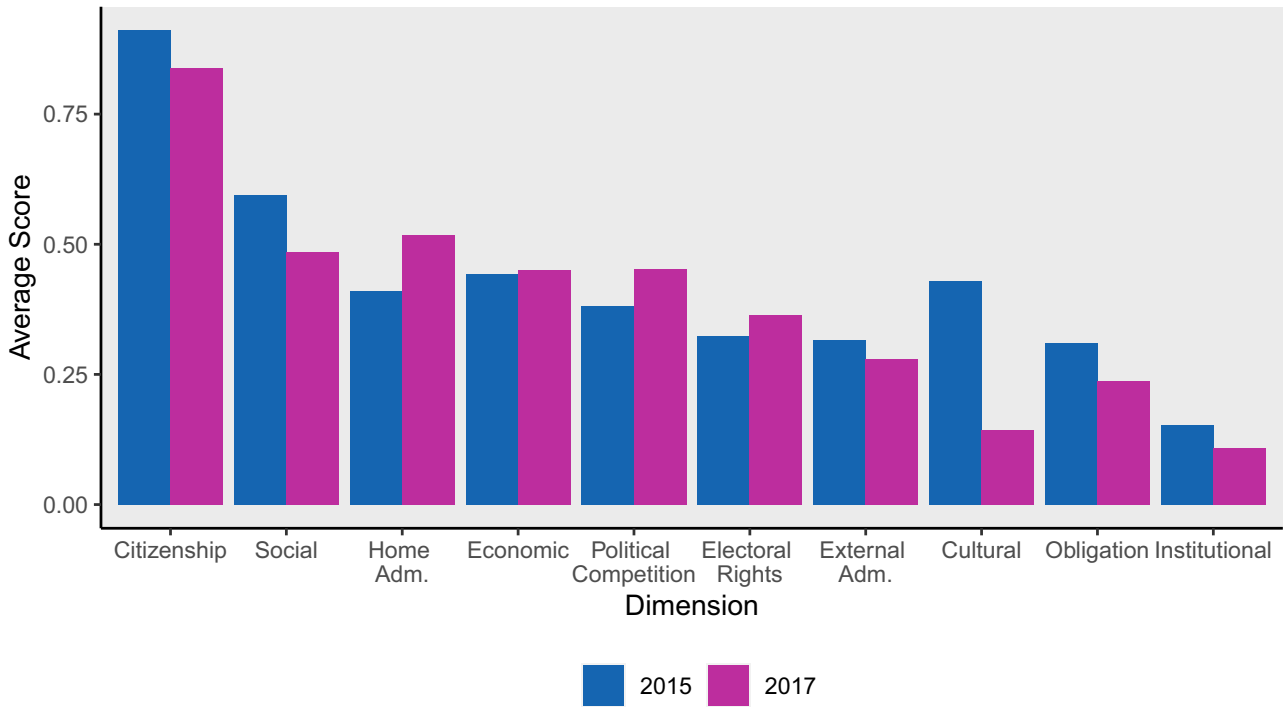
After the financial crisis of the late 1990s in Ecuador, the *Revolución Ciudadana* led Rafael Correa to the Ecuadorian presidency in 2007. Correa, himself a person who experienced emigration, was able to speak to and garner the support of a growing diaspora proclaiming a 'universal citizenship' and, once in power, he delivered. Correa's government enfranchised Ecuadorian migrants in the amplest sense of the term: through the recognition of dual nationality, Ecuadorians were encouraged to remain citizens even after having naturalized in their countries of residence; they were granted electoral rights (both active and passive external suffrage), including special representation in parliament (Palop-García, 2018), and also a wide range of social rights (e.g. scholarships, access to health services).

The zenith of all these policies was the adoption of the Human Mobility Law (*Ley Orgánica de Movilidad Humana*). This is a comprehensive legal framework that applies to all migrants (both non-resident citizens and non-citizen residents) and materializes Correa's vision of universal citizenship. In 2017, however, a few weeks after the approval of the Human Mobility Law, the political landscape changed in

Ecuador, and not due to party alternation. President Correa left power after completing the constitutional maximum of two presidential terms, and the *Revolución Ciudadana* ended in the factional division of Correa's political movement, Alianza PAIS, after Correa's successor, Lenin Moreno, emerged from Correa's influence. This had consequences in a variety of policy areas. A bill introduced in the summer of 2019 (*Proyecto de Ley Orgánica Reformatoria a la Ley Orgánica de Movilidad Humana*) to the Ecuadorian Parliament aims to change 110 of the 159 articles of the Human Mobility Law, constituting a major overhaul of the legal base for a wide range of migration policies.

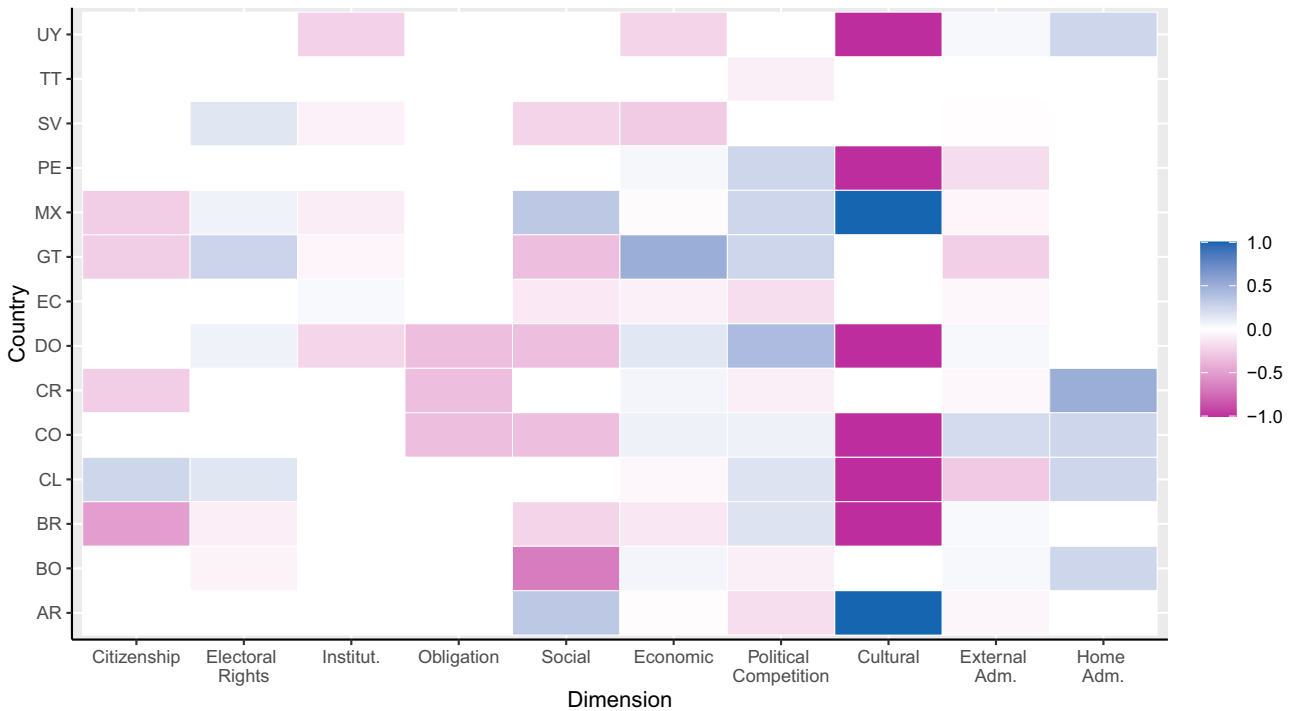
The comparison between EMIX 2015 and EMIX 2017 allows us to accurately observe the changes that this new government meant for Ecuadorian emigrant policies. As Figure 4 shows, Ecuador has, in 2015 and 2017, the same score in five index subcomponents (citizenship, electoral rights, cultural, obligations, and home administration), and only advanced in one (institutional participation), due to the activation in 2017 of the Equality Council of Human Mobility (*Consejo de Igualdad de Movilidad Humana*).⁷ For the other four subcomponents (economic, social, political competition, and external administration), however, the scores dropped due to the termination of several policies covered by those subcomponents. These is, for instance, the ending of campaigns to foster the return of migrants in the medical sector (which we include in the economic policies subcomponent), or the closure of consular missions abroad (which we include in the external administration subcomponent). Although seemingly small in the larger comparative picture, due to the aggregative nature of our scores, these policy shifts occurring in only a matter of two years constitutes seismic changes for emigrants and their relation to Ecuador: the disappearance of return programs can redefine the life choices of thousands of people; the disappearance of consular offices can increase the vulnerability of emigrants abroad.

Figure 3. Average regional scores (subcomponent level) between 2015 and 2017



Source: Own elaboration based on the EMIX dataset.

Figure 4. Change in policy subcomponents between 2015 and 2017



Source: Own elaboration based on the EMIX dataset. Values range from -1 to 1. Negative values are represented in shades of purple and indicate a negative policy change. Positive values are represented with shades of blue and indicate a positive policy change; either an adoption of a new policy or the expansion of an existing policy.

5. Conclusions

In line with previous studies (Délano and Gamlen, 2014), our findings confirm that all countries in our sample have developed several components of emigrant policies and yet, that there is significant variation in the region we studied. Trendsetter countries with widespread emigrant policies, such as Mexico or Ecuador, have a higher degree of emigrant policy adoption based on their establishment of policies across *all* subcomponents of policy in the EMIX framework. In LAC, there are also countries with scant interest in their diaspora, such as Trinidad and Tobago or Costa Rica, with many 'empty' subcomponents of policy which carry through to a lower degree of overall adoption.

Our research question about the change of policies between 2015 and 2017 yields an intriguing answer: while no country in the sample had a drastic change in its overall degree of adoption of emigrant policies or in their policy mix (the dimensions of policy developed), all countries adjusted different dimensions of emigrant policy within just two years. We observed that policies in the realms of citizenship and home administration are more stable than cultural policies or policies that regulate external political competition. By observing rigorously *what* changes, this article brings us a step closer to being able to explain *why* these changes occur.

5.1. Discussion and further steps

We urge colleagues to use the EMIX to study other regions in order to gauge whether our findings are particular to the region we studied (where normative path dependencies and regional diffusion might account for clustering) or hold if the sample is larger. Moreover, we strongly encourage future research to focus on explaining the varying continuity of emigrant policies across different realms. As of 2019, the growth of stock-taking exercises in the field of migration policies is staggering. Existing databases have been thoroughly discussed and validated (Bjerre et al. 2013; Gest et al. 2014; Helbling, 2013; Scipioni and Urso, 2017, among others). However, it is important to once again note that most of these works focus on immigration and immigrant (inclusion/integration) policies. A few steps behind, the study of emigrant policies still faces at present the tradeoff between theoretical depth and neat explanations that was once characteristic of the study of immigration/immigrant policies (see Boswell, 2007).

As Solano and Huddleston (this issue) emphasize, only the sustained collection of longitudinal data for many countries and regions beyond developed Western countries will solve this. Studies of emigrant policies should strive to develop an idea of which emigrant policies are here to stay because, for now, what cross-sectional studies find at one point in time may not hold in a later iteration. While there are some comparative (quantitative and qualitative) studies on the structures that sustain emigrant policies for some regions (Margheritis, 2016; Palop-García and Pedroza, 2020; Soltész, 2016) and for the world (Gamlen, 2019), we need to develop tools to observe and measure the wide range of emigrant policies (and not only their organizational

base) over time. The advance of the EMIX presented in this special issue is made with the hope that the academic and policy making communities will respond to this call, which we have also repeatedly made in international academic fora. Our results confirm that the EMIX is a useful tool to capture changes in the adoption of policies over time, even in short periods. This speaks to the validity of the tool and opens the path for truly long-term studies.

To make this call meaningful, we want to suggest that, with longitudinal data and, ideally, coverage of more countries across other regions, future lines of inquiry could delve into the institutionalization of emigrant policies. A fruitful undertaking could be to explore whether the stability or changeability of some emigrant policies depend on their embeddedness in higher-level norms protected by procedural constraints (Offe 2019), on processes needing consent for reform (Boswell, 2007), or on the degree of involvement of local bureaucracies in them (Bhuyan and Smith-Carrier, 2012; Rosenhek, 2000). Our finding here that policies on citizenship, nationality, and electoral rights seem more stable than the regulation of external political competition is suggestive for further research on the forms of political participation promoted by states of origin. Also, applying theories on the 'professional idioms' and 'bureaucratic logics' could prove useful to analyze the degrees to which consular networks internalize services to the diaspora, a domain *per excellence* of emigrant policy innovations.

Last but not least, combining the EMIX dataset with other well-established datasets such as IMPIC, which measured immigration policies (Helbling et al., 2017), MIPEX, which studies immigrant policies (or integration policies), or Determinants of International Migration, which studies policy changes in migration policy, could allow us to understand to what extent the institutionalization of some migration policies is mirrored for immigrants and emigrants.⁸ Although these datasets are not immediately compatible (as they cover different countries and different points in time), we think that more collaboration and cooperation is not only needed if we want to move our field forward, but also possible (as demonstrated by Schmid, this issue). Achieving this requires not only the willingness of researchers to work together, but also the long-term support of governments, international organizations, and research institutions on national and transnational levels.

The work presented here has some clear limitations. Although the comparison of two time points (2015–17) with the methodology proposed in this article opens the path for future longitudinal analyses, it is necessary to add more temporal observations to enhance the validity of the findings presented. Also, the depth of our descriptive account is limited due to space constraints, but the changes in particular policies should be complemented by both in-depth case studies and quantitative studies that are able to accommodate institutional and demographic contexts of the countries of origin and engage in explanatory mechanisms for the adoption of emigrant policies. Another limitation of this research, shared with several migration policy indexes, is that it stays at the adoption of emigrant policies, unable to measure their implementation. Future research with

innovative qualitative methods such as multi-sited ethnographies and 'ethnographies of law/policy in action' may compensate for this limitation.

Substantively, we have an important task ahead: there is a serious need to improve migration policies worldwide and we will only be able to do this if we possess valid, robust, and compatible data on *all* aspects of migration policies.

Notes

- EMIX data for 2015 is openly available in SoWiDataNet Datorium at <https://doi.org/10.7802/1499>. Data for the EMIX 2017 is available upon request from the authors. In the future, data for EMIX 2017 will be published in an open access repository. The original EMIX (2015) was composed of ten dimensions of policy: citizenship policies, electoral rights, institutional consultation, external obligations, economic policies, social policies, political competition abroad, cultural policies, symbolic policies, and exit and transit policies (Pedroza and Palop-García 2017). Some of the items included in each of the previous policy dimensions have changed or adapted in the most recent iteration of the EMIX. For an overview of the changes between the original version of the EMIX and the one used in this article, see online Appendix II.
- Relative to the few longitudinal works comparing emigrant policies across countries (Margheritis 2016; Gamlen 2019; Soltész 2016) this measurement of ADMINISTRATION has the advantage of focusing not only on the central bureaucracies that design and oversee emigrant policies, but also the span and new functions that the consular network adopt, which are vehicles *par excellence* of innovation of emigrant policies.
- We use arithmetic, not geometric, means to allow policies to compensate each other. With this strategy, the absence of one component can be compensated by the presence of another.
- Part of the difference in the citizenship scores for Mexico are due to a coding error in the 2015 EMIX version in the indicator that captures the restrictions for the exercise of citizen rights if an individual has dual or multiple nationalities. This error has been amended in the 2017 version.
- Military service for emigrants from the Dominican Republic was registered in the 2015 as 'Non-applicable'. However, military service does exist in Dominican Republic. This error has been corrected in the 2017 version.
- For Mexico, there has been a change in the interpretation of the indicator that captures passive electoral rights. The answer in the 2015 version is 'No', and the answer in the 2017 version is 'Only if past residence or birth in the territory'. Mexican electoral federalism allows states to fix and relax other rules on candidacy rights and some states of the federation do allow their emigrants to stand as candidates.
- In 2014, the Organic Law of the National Councils for Equality had created the Equality Council of Human Mobility (*Consejo de Igualdad de Movilidad Humana*), but it was not fully regulated and activated until 2017.
- To an important extent, the research carried out by the authors in a larger team (the Every Immigrant is an Emigrant, IMISEM) will make that kind of analysis possible, as it incorporates immigration and immigrant policies and builds on the shoulders of datasets that developed measurements for them.

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

APPENDIX S1. EMIX Framework (iteration 2017)

APPENDIX S2. Changes in the EMIX framework between 2015 and 2017

APPENDIX S3. Descriptives

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