

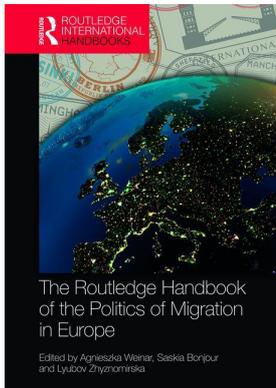
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## **The Routledge Handbook of the Politics of Migration in Europe**

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### **Politics of emigration in Europe**

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# 3

## POLITICS OF EMIGRATION IN EUROPE

*Agnieszka Weinar*

### **Introduction**

Emigration is a term that has had a much longer life in European scholarship than immigration. Indeed, immigration is a quite new phenomenon in Europe: it took off substantially in the decades after the World War II. Emigration on the other hand has a centuries-long tradition. Moreover, while some countries of Europe shifted to net immigration, a higher number of countries stayed on the net emigration side. In the European Union (EU) alone in 2016, fifteen countries had net immigration while thirteen had net emigration. It is clear that Europe is a continent of emigration as much as it is a continent of immigration.

The mainstream scholarship has not been equally engaged with both ends of the migration continuum. Nuancing the two-way migration status of Europe has been abandoned and instead, the projected image of Europe is that of an immigration continent. This image projects a relatively recent experience of a handful of Western European countries onto the entire continent.

In this chapter, I will present the main debates on emigration in Europe in the following way: first, I will describe historical developments of European emigration scholarship; then I will discuss the place European emigration research has in global migration and diaspora studies. I will conclude this brief review with considerations of the conceptual issues that might pose barriers to the development of the field, as well as the way forward.

### **Perspectives on European emigration**

#### *Historical views*

Europe has a long tradition of regulating the exit of people. In fact, it had the first migration policy in history, practiced over centuries in all the states that were developed enough to assure administrative control of its subjects (Mau *et al.*, 2012; Torpey, 2000). Until the post-World War II period, emigration was not perceived (socially and legally) as a right (Dowty, 1989). The state (or another administrative unit) was in full control over the mobility of its subjects, and later, citizens. An individual was the basic element of the systems of production, taxation and culture. This vision lay behind the indenture structures (approved by the state but executed on lower levels of government) binding peasants to the land, for example. Emigration was seen as

a loss, especially in situations of increased need for human capital, e.g. during wars or industrialisation periods (Zolberg, 1989). As a result, the outward mobility of vast parts of the population in Europe was restricted for centuries. The massive transatlantic migration of the late 1800s/early 1900s was caused by the Europe-wide release of indentured peasants and artisans, which was in turn made possible by the demographic boom and industrialisation. Policies regulating exit became more sophisticated and even if mobility was easier, it was still regulated (e.g. by the requirement of permits to move between jurisdictions, especially in the late period of colonialism and transatlantic migrations (Mau *et al.*, 2012)).

In the post-World War II period, the approach to individual rights changed. The Cold War and the division of the continent into liberal Western democracies and the totalitarian block of communist states which restricted the outflow of citizens made emigration a fundamental human right (legislated for) in the West. Indeed, emigration began to be portrayed as a state failure. In Western Europe, decreasing outflows led scholars to focus their attention elsewhere. The issue of emigration from Northern European countries has rarely been discussed by Western social studies scholars, even despite the fact that countries such as West Germany or the UK saw net emigration well into the 1960s. Indeed, the vast field of European emigration and diaspora studies has been left to the historians. The longer tradition of outflows from Southern European countries has been analysed more but even this stream of literature weakened over time (Baganha, 1988; Gabaccia, 1997; Russell, 1986; Weiner, 1995).

Emigration policy studies in post-war Europe developed over the years in two different directions: (1) criticism of emigration restrictions imposed by totalitarian states in Eastern Europe; and (2) emigration seen as an economic policy of developing states outside Europe. The first substantially equated emigration policy with exit bans, while the second paved the way to what is known today as diaspora studies. Critique of emigration policies understood as exit bans was popular with Western academics. Dowty (1989) systematically analysed two processes used by totalitarian states to regulate the flows of its own citizens: exit restrictions and forced emigration. Dowty found that egalitarian regimes (or systems) tend to restrict exit more than nationalistic regimes. Left-wing regimes (i.e. communist regimes) saw emigration as a betrayal of ideology, an escape from a common community project and an individualistic choice. Moreover, the arguments used were generally economic: in the communist era, the authorities argued that they did not want people educated at the expense of the society (community) to profit other countries and societies. The promoted image of emigration as a dangerous and painful experience only added arguments for a strict control on exits. Interestingly, in European communist states emigration was banned only in Albania and Romania (until 1989). However, in other countries exit control was implemented bureaucratically, for example, through difficult passport procedures (Stola, 2012).

This is not to say that communist regimes did not encourage emigration: they did, for political opponents. Forced emigration was usually achieved through indirect actions (administrative difficulties, limits to rights) or direct invitations to leave (Kłoczowski and Beauvois, 2000; Matelski, 1999; Stola, 1992, 2000). In these cases, the exit bans were lifted and passports were delivered quickly.

The second view on emigration policy has been developed in the area of development studies and focuses on the impact of brain-drain on the development prospects of low-income countries (Adams and Rieben, 1968). Interestingly, scholars from highly developed countries did not focus at all on the same questions in relation to their own societies. Rather, they engaged in the debate in the context of low-income countries. In this way, emigration policy became something for less fortunate states and began to be associated with social, political and economic failure. At the opposite end, immigration policy has become the prerogative of wealthy and successful states.

This is not to say that European scholars did not look into emigration at all. In Southern Europe, but also in Ireland, emigration has been a core part of research developed side by side with immigration studies. Emigration scholars were interested mainly in the way diaspora and emigrants build connections with the country of origin (Glynn, 2011; Tintori, 2009). Some focused on the impact of emigration on the economic prospects of the country (Baganha, 1994; Faini and Venturini, 1994). However the most work on emigration has been done since 1989 by scholars in Eastern and Central Europe, for obvious reasons: the volume of emigration there is still higher than immigration, a trend that was actually reinforced after the fall of communism, when people were finally free to move.

### ***Post-1989 emigration in Europe***

Emigration and emigration policy are still the main focus of scholarship in post-communist European states (Hazans, 2010; McCollum and Apsite-Berina, 2015; Okólski and Stola, 1999; Vaculík, 2002). This scholarship has tackled the impact of emigration on the country of origin, as well as on the emigrants themselves. Brain-drain, development, citizenship, costs to the society of origin, and the human rights of emigrants are the main concepts discussed in this literature.

In contrast to Western European (or Southern European) accounts, the scholars in post-communist states had a rare occasion to push forward the theoretical framing of emigration and diaspora studies while studying their own societies, given the new phenomena that emerged in 1990s: millions of Europeans across the continent engaged in what has been conceptualised as ‘shuttle migration’ (Iglicka, 2000), ‘pendular migration’ (Kupiszewski, 2006) or ‘incomplete migration’ (Okólski, 2001). All these terms denoted the same phenomenon: the back-and-forth mobility created by the peculiar mobility policies developed on the continent after 1989. Visa liberalisation for the citizens of the post-communist states of Eastern and Central Europe in 1995 allowed for periodic, circular movements of workers between the EU and this region. At the same time, the citizens of several Eastern European post-Soviet states did not need visas to enter the Central Eastern European (CEE) post-communist countries until their accession to the EU in 2004, which created another zone of mobility.

CEE migrant workers would go for short periods of time to work in specific sectors of the Western and Southern European economy (domestic care, construction or agriculture), while citizens from post-Soviet states chose CEE countries as their destinations in the same sectors (Kindler, 2011; Weinar, 2006). All would enter as ‘tourists’ for ninety days and their employment was more often than not illegal. Shuttle migration stabilised after the EU accession and became less popular among the citizens of the EU Eastern Member States (Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski, 2008, 2009), but it is still a predominant form of mobility in the post-Soviet space (Di Bartolomeo *et al.*, 2012; Marchetti and Venturini, 2014).

Apart from describing and conceptualising mobility patterns, scholars also looked at the economic and social impacts of this mobility on the countries of origin. ‘Incomplete migration’ eased the pressures on the labour market during the difficult transition years of the 1990s and mitigated the economic instabilities. Social remittances brought about by this migration supported the European integration because they built visible links with what was perceived as Europe’s core (Jazwinska and Okólski, 2001).

The year 2004 brought seismic changes to emigration patterns in Europe. Eight post-communist countries that had become new members of the EU saw a new phenomenon of what is now called in literature ‘post-accession emigration’ (Black *et al.*, 2010; Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski, 2009; Hazans and Philips, 2009; Levitz and Pop-Eleches, 2010). In the

same period, migration from the non-EU Eastern European countries was more and more equally distributed between the EU and Russia (Bara *et al.*, 2013a, 2013b). In the Western Balkans, regional circular mobility has been the predominant form of emigration (Kupiszewski *et al.*, 2009).

Interestingly enough, the destinations for emigrants from the European continent as a whole changed in that period as well: countries outside Europe, such as the US or Canada, lost their dominant position as emigration destinations for Europeans, and European destinations, such as the UK, Germany and Russia became the top destinations (Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski, 2008; Kaczmarczyk *et al.*, 2012). This was clearly related to the facilitated mobility on the European continent in two sub-regional political and economic zones: the EU and the Commonwealth of Independent States. EU destinations benefited from the intra-EU mobility for EU nationals, as well as from the complex web of agreements and labour mobility programs negotiated by the non-EU countries of origin (European Training Foundation, 2015). Likewise, Russia maintained a multilayered structure of facilitated mobility for citizens of various CIS states (Iontsev and Ivakhnyuk, 2012; Kupets, 2012b).

At the same time, the periods spent abroad grew longer: for the intra-EU movers, the legality of stay was no longer linked to the ninety-days rule; for non-EU Eastern Europeans, the periods spent abroad became longer due to the obstacles posed by regulations on a Schengen visa, the specific circular migration programmes offered by some of the EU Member States (e.g. Italy, Spain or Poland) as well as by facilitated mobility within the Commonwealth of Independent States (Di Bartolomeo *et al.*, 2012; Weinar, 2014).

Post-enlargement emigration has been the focus of the largest wave of English-language studies on emigration in the post-World War II era. Scholars from all disciplines were interested in the effects that such massive flows of people had on the economies and societies of the countries of origin. These seemed to be varied. As regards labour markets, Poland benefited from the outflows, which stimulated its economy (Kaczmarczyk *et al.*, 2012), while a country like Latvia faced depopulation and economic stagnation (McCollum *et al.*, 2013). The topic of 'Euro-orphans' was on the scholarly agenda as well (Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck, 2012; Marchetti and Venturini, 2014; Urbanska, 2009), reflecting on children that were left in the countries of origin by parents working in Western EU Member States. This theme linked the literature of intra-EU mobility with the literature of emigration to the EU from Eastern Europe: scholars from countries like Moldova or Ukraine also engaged in studies of the social impacts of prolonged labour mobility and especially the effects on those left behind (Mosneaga, 2012; Tolstokorova, 2010). The economic effects, especially as regards remittances, have also been studied to some extent (Kupets, 2012a).

In the margin of these academic developments were studies that followed a very particular type of emigrants: life-style emigrants. This relatively small stream of emigration literature focused on relatively wealthy Northern Europeans who chose to emigrate for extended periods abroad, mostly pensioners moving to Southern destinations. The research in this stream presents largely sociological and ethnographic accounts of their experience and has not been involved in policy analysis (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009; King *et al.*, 2000), with the exception of a handful of scholars looking at the public policy impacts of mobile retirees (Coldron and Ackers, 2009; La Parra and Mateo, 2008).

The latest wave of interest in emigration across the continent was brought about by the financial crisis of 2008. Those leaving Western Europe were a reminder that Europe is, in fact, a region of emigration (Finch *et al.*, 2010; Gilmartin, 2015; Glynn *et al.*, 2013; Marques, 2014; Okólski, 2009). The issue of emigrating skilled youth (especially from the countries most hit by the recession) was put at the centre of several EU-wide research activities<sup>1</sup> and prompted a

renewed interest in European emigration in the twenty-first century in mainstream literature (Balci and Michielsen, 2013; Cairns, 2014). This included emigration to non-EU destinations (Weinar, 2017a). That interest turned attention to the policies governing relations with European emigrants and diasporas.

### Emigration and diaspora policies in Europe

In this section I would like to make a distinction between temporary workers and diaspora members. The definition of diaspora is a very contentious one and has been debated elsewhere (Bauböck and Faist, 2010). As explained elsewhere in this volume (van Houte, this volume), it is not perfectly clear who can be counted as a diaspora member, and indeed it seems the inclusion/exclusion criteria are based on a political choice of the country of origin (Desiderio and Weinar, 2014). There is however a fundamental difference between individuals moving temporarily, such as students and temporary workers, and those settled permanently abroad or born abroad: they need different types of support from their country of origin (Weinar, 2017b). So far, these distinctions have not been widely recognised by the scholarship in diaspora studies, although some debates have been initiated (Délano and Gamlen, 2014). Recently, I suggested making a distinction between policies that influence the mobility of citizens (emigration policies) and policies that build links with diaspora (Weinar *et al.*, 2017; Weinar, 2017b). The distinction in my opinion must be made in the face of new processes shaping the mobility of people worldwide: states have been more and more involved in managing the outward mobility of their citizens, not so much through exit bans, but through the use of bilateral and multilateral arrangements that support visa-free mobility or facilitate access to foreign labour markets for temporary or more permanent periods. These types of policies cannot be called ‘diaspora policies’ because they do not focus on a settled community of kinspeople abroad and on their political, economic or cultural rights. Their primary targets are citizens willing to migrate for shorter or longer periods of time and who thus expect mobility facilitations. The prior example of such an arrangement is intra-EU mobility: from the perspective of the countries of origin, it brings about the perfect legal framework, lowering risks related to outward mobility, supporting more temporary movements and replacing permanent emigration in many cases. Diaspora policies are much broader, assuring links with the countries of origin for the populations that are settled abroad, much in line with the definitions provided in the literature (citizenship rights, economic rights or heritage promotion).

Following this line of analysis, it is clear that in post-1989 Europe emigration policies as defined above have been in full bloom. Mobility has become much easier for the majority of Europeans across the continent. The countries aspiring to EU membership were able to secure almost risk-free emigration for their citizens after accession. Those in the EU neighbourhood have been able to negotiate not only visa facilitation or liberalisation agreements, but also a range of bilateral labour mobility agreements (this includes temporary workers programmes and youth mobility programmes) with the EU but also Russia. The focus on equal access to labour markets and workers’ rights for emigrants in the EU has been a top concern for countries such as Moldova or Turkey. The mobility towards the Russian Federation has also pushed several countries in Eastern Europe to raise the question of equal treatment for their emigrants (Makarayan, 2013; Makarayan and Chobanyan, 2014). It seems that non-European countries of origin have a harder time assuring mobility facilitation than the countries in the web of political arrangements on the continent (Weinar, 2017a).

The particular stream of diaspora studies focuses on the policies and politics of dealings with diaspora and migrant populations abroad. Promoted by international organisations (Agunias,

2009; de Haas, 2006; Weinar, 2010), the policies of countries of origin such as the Philippines or Mexico are now being replicated all over the globe, including in some European countries (Collyer, 2013). The main two axes of these policies are diaspora-building and diaspora-engagement (Gamlen, 2008). The first type of policies focuses on building political and cultural extraterritorial communities (e.g. extending citizenship and voting rights to populations abroad), while the second targets the economic engagement of diaspora in the country of origin (especially through remittance programmes for investment in the countries of origin).

Political rights have been a focus of research developed primarily at the European Union Democracy Observatory.<sup>2</sup> The research was prompted by the observation that more and more European countries were accepting or tolerating dual citizenship (Bauböck *et al.*, 2009; Faist, 2012; Vink and Bauböck, 2013). It was a natural process for the post-communist states, who relinked in this way to those who had left the country during the years of the regime. Several Western European countries simply followed the decades-long tradition of building links with emigrants (like Ireland or Portugal) or giving citizenship rights to mobile citizens (Spain or France). Voting rights for emigrants have been an important part of these analyses. Arringhi *et al.* (2013) noted that countries in Europe have given more voting rights to the populations residing abroad over the last 20 years (Collyer, 2013; Lafleur, 2011, 2015; Lisi *et al.*, 2014; Tintori, 2012; Vink and Bauböck, 2013). As regards national elections, EU nationals who migrate are subject to the national legal framework on electoral rights: they can be allowed to vote as non-migrant residents; they may be allowed to vote for representatives in specific external districts (Italy, France, Portugal, Croatia); they may be allowed to vote only when they go back to their country of origin; or, they may face disenfranchisement altogether if they stay away for a longer period (the case for six countries in 2014).

The European Commission also seems to have held an important influence as regards voting rights in the case of European elections. The EU itself does not legislate on national voting rights, but it can influence the national legislation to assure equal treatment of EU citizens who reside in their country of origin and those who do not. In the 2014 elections to the European Parliament, the legislation of four EU Member States made it impossible for their citizens staying abroad to vote for candidates in their country of origin. The only way mobile EU citizens could have voted was to be a resident of another EU Member State and vote for the candidates of that state. Obviously, EU nationals who do not take up residence (e.g. visitors or short-term students), as well as those EU citizens who stay outside of the EU, are excluded from this possibility.

A closer look at the publications in the field of political rights for emigrants shows that there is a correlation between how the state defines nationhood and how it builds political bonds with those who have left (Collyer, 2013; Lafleur, 2015; Lisi *et al.*, 2014; Tintori, 2012; Vink and Bauböck, 2013). There is no particularly European pattern to this (Weinar, 2017c). The approach has been elaborated through decades of emigration and diaspora-building (or diaspora-shaming) and thus the end result is not homogenous, although we see a certain preference for more generous policies in this domain. The countries with more historical and recent emigration flows and a strong ethno-national identity tend to confer more rights to their diaspora in an effort to promote nation-building (Collyer, 2013). The differences are not really about Northern, Southern, Eastern or Western Europe, but about how the given country historically thought about their diaspora. In France, emigres are perceived as citizens, a valuable element of French international power, and hence emigres have strong political ties to France and benefit from active mobility policies, such as support for labour market insertion in several countries, extensive youth exchange programmes and support for information on outward mobility possibilities (Hampshire, 2013). In the UK, emigres are not thought of at all; they are treated as a part

of the global flows of people and as having no special consequence for the country, hence e.g. their limited political rights. The long-term positive historical discourses overshadow periods of shaming in the case of the post-communist states, which cherish their emigrants before and after the communist rule, while shaming them during that rule (Stola, 2000). Century-long traditions of cherishing emigrants as heroes escaping poverty are present in Italy and Portugal, for example (Franzina, 2014, Santana-Pereira and Horta, 2017). The Russian approach to diaspora, however, is now quite puzzling: on the one hand, it provides generous citizenship policies to Russophone communities (especially in neighbouring countries) and often threatens pre-emptive action to protect their cultural and economic rights; on the other, it has become highly suspicious towards dual nationals and people emigrating abroad for longer periods. Finally, there are countries that do not confer political rights to those living abroad for fear of disproportionate influence: Ireland and Malta's populations of emigrants, for example, outnumber their domestic populations (Buttigieg and DeBono, 2015; Glynn *et al.*, 2013).

Diaspora engagement is an area where the European states have had a mixed record. They tend to focus more on heritage promotion than on economic engagement for investment. European states support cultural events and cultural education (e.g. language courses) among the diasporas, but they are less interested in investment and economic ties (with some exceptions). One reason for this is that the migration and development agenda has been, for the longest time, identified as the policy for developing countries of the Global South. European countries, in or out of the EU, would not want to admit to being interested in a policy prescribed for low-income countries on other continents. Yet some of the countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, particularly Albania and Moldova, have become leaders in this approach. Another reason is that diaspora engagement has been mainstreamed in the majority of the EU Member States and is referred to as business promotion, with companies that are linked to the diaspora being the main targets. However, a proper diaspora strategy is a novelty for many European countries that only decided to develop one in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis (e.g. Latvia). Only a few European countries have a policy towards returnees (temporary workers coming back or returning diaspora members). Interestingly, these policies tend to be promoted by the EU as a part of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility in non-EU countries (see Reslow, this volume), while EU Member States do not bother to engage in such policies at all.

Probably the core difference between the EU and non-EU Europe as regards emigration and diaspora is the image of each. The EU Member States focus their efforts on immigration rather than on emigration, even if they are net emigration countries. They have no incentive, coming from either peer policy networks or the EU-level, to invest in diaspora engagement or returnee policies. However, the European countries outside of the EU have been the target of international policy networks to adopt such policies (see van Houte, this volume).

### **Emigrants and mobile citizens: a new/old research area**

In the previous sections I sketched the state-of-the-art in emigration scholarship in Europe. There are still research and policy gaps that could be addressed in the future academic work in this domain.

The first problem in existing scholarship is conceptualisation. Who is a European emigrant in the twenty-first century? The dominant image of European emigrant is that of an ethnic European individual leaving for a permanent stay abroad. The growing temporary and circular mobility due to supporting policies make this particular image outdated. International mobility is now a European value, seen as an important feature of the life of the European educated

elites: the 'Eurostars' (Favell, 2011) have become 'Euroboomerangs', i.e. Europeans engaged in prolonged periods of work or studies abroad, with many actually returning home at some point.

The second problem is the assumptions we make about the characteristics of the diaspora and migrants. Somehow, the nation states (not only in Europe, but predominantly so) visualise their diaspora as a mono-cultural and mono-ethnic entity. Only the UK openly suggests that it does not have a developed diaspora policy because of the diversity of its own emigrants. In other countries, especially those building close political ties with the nation-beyond-the-borders, the diaspora policies always focus on the ethnic majority (e.g. Turkish diaspora policies do not target the Kurds, Polish diaspora outreach does not take the Polish Ukrainians into account). And yet the people emigrating from European countries reflect European diversity, be it ethnic or linguistic (e.g. on the Belgian case see (Lafleur, 2011)). There is also the migration of naturalised citizens, or their descendants, that must be taken into account. How to develop diaspora policies (be it heritage promotion or diaspora engagement) towards a diverse group is probably the most important challenge for the European emigration and diaspora policymakers in the twenty-first century.

A third issue is the presence of the EU, which actually changed the understanding of migration on the continent. There is a clear inside/outside division in how migration is defined. Inside the EU, internal migration is seen as flows of EU citizens exercising their rights to mobility. The internal framework supporting rights and eliminating risks to migration makes many diaspora and emigration policies of individual states superfluous. However, the EU does not support EU citizens trying their luck outside of the EU (e.g. in the US or Australia), leaving this to the individual Member States. It seems that in non-European countries, consideration of emigration has also shifted, prompted by the EU example. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Eurasian Union is focusing on creating a legal framework that fundamentally changes the risks of emigrating within this geopolitical region (Iontsev and Ivakhnyuk, 2012). The question that needs to be further explored is whether such regional entities create a fundamentally different experience of emigration, and thus shape the diaspora and emigration policies of their Member States in a meaningful way.

Fourth and finally, there is the new wave of trade agreements that include important facilitations of the mobility of people while lowering the risks of emigration. They involve the EU and other developed countries, but also include neighbouring countries in Europe. What might be the role of the trade agreements in changing the landscape of diaspora policy making?

Emigration and diaspora policies as well as politics in Europe thus offer several promising avenues for research and academic inquiry.

## Notes

- 1 E.g. [www.imiscoe.org/what-imiscoe-does/research/research-groups/146-yamec](http://www.imiscoe.org/what-imiscoe-does/research/research-groups/146-yamec).
- 2 [www.eui.eu/Projects/EUDO/Home.aspx/](http://www.eui.eu/Projects/EUDO/Home.aspx/).

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