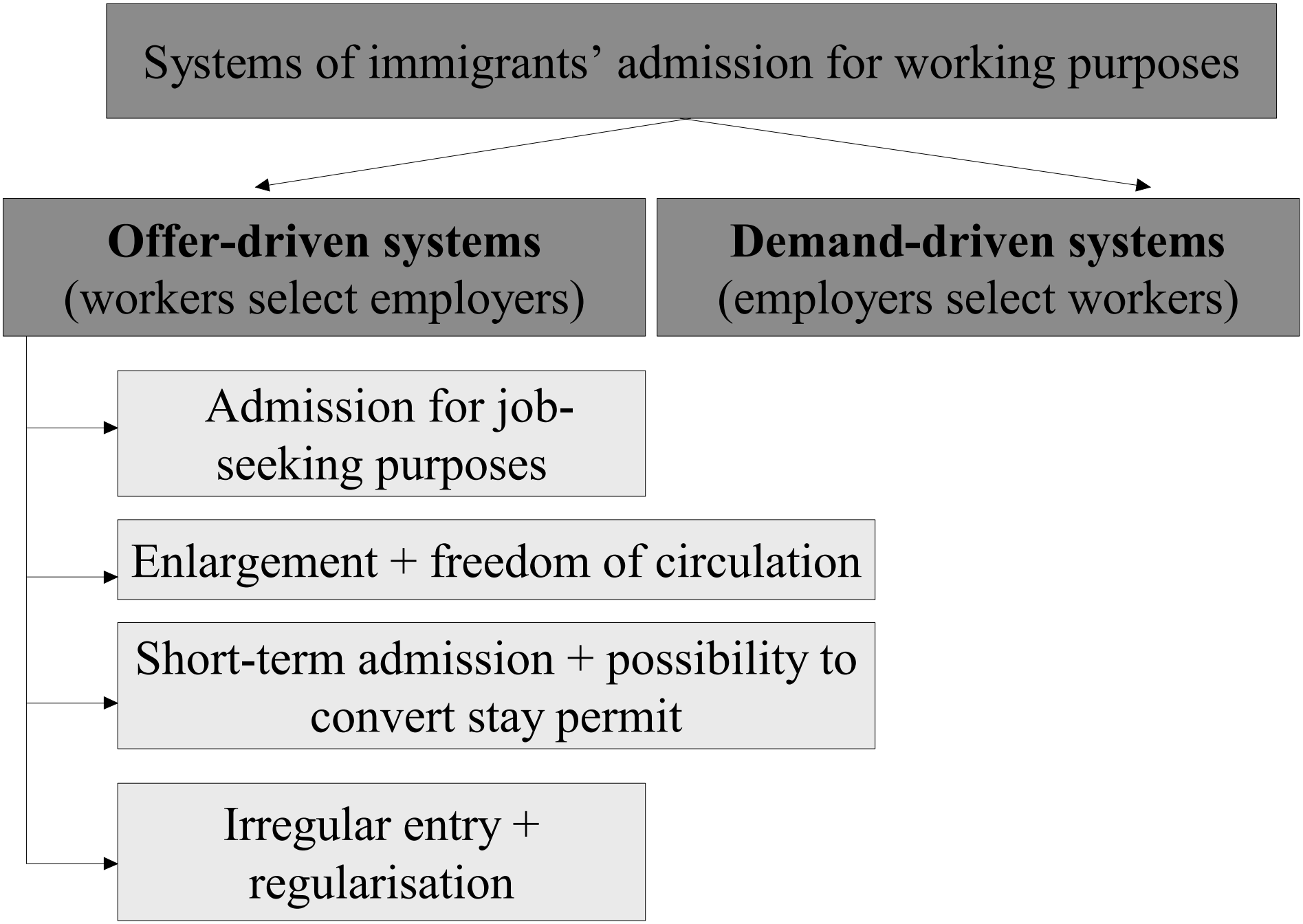
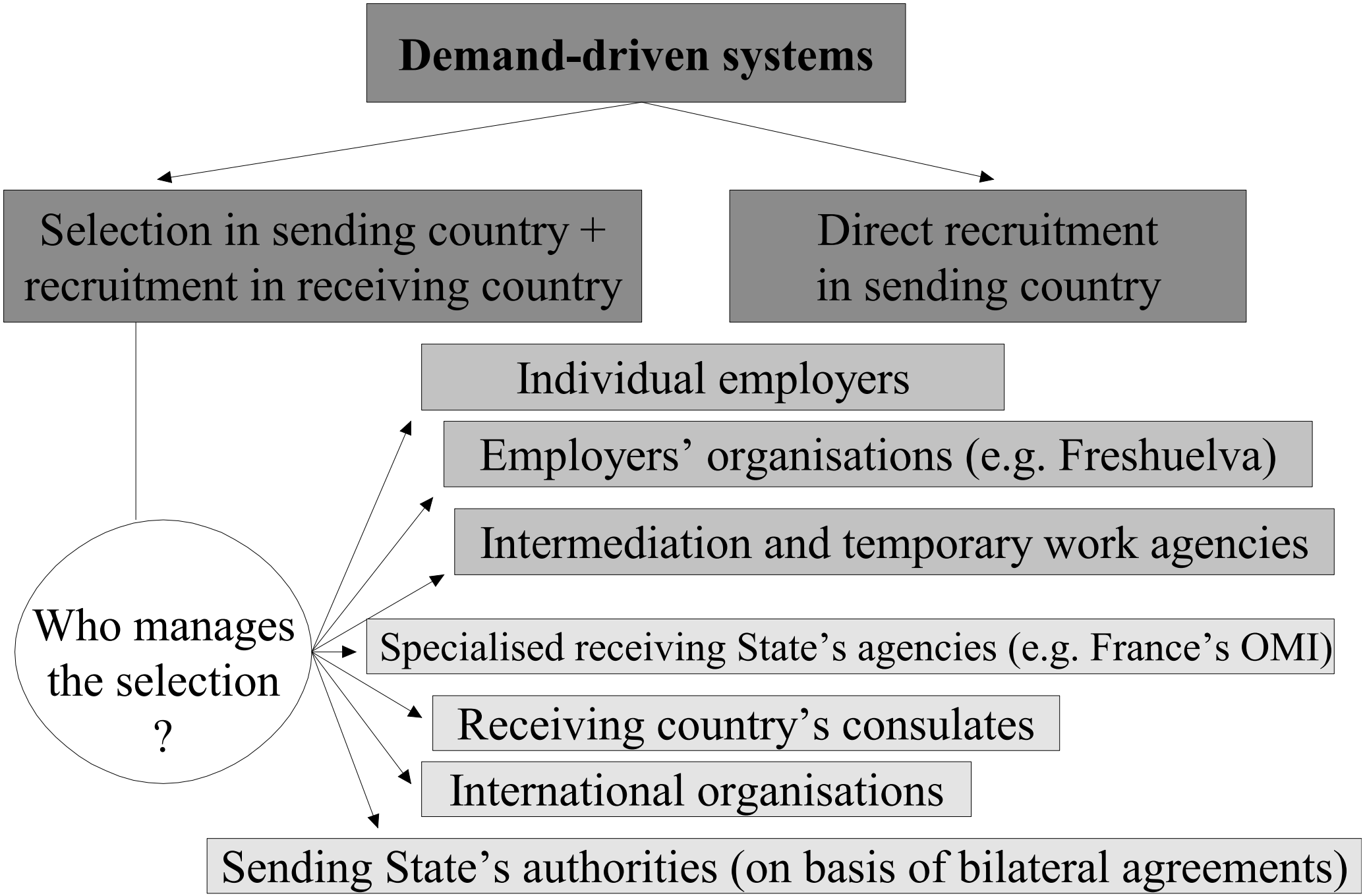
The heterogeneity of national admission systems and its implications for the EU policy on legal immigration

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Systems of immigrants' admission for working purposes
Offer-driven systems
(workers select employers)
Demand-driven systems
(employers select workers)
Admission for job-seeking purposes
Enlargement + freedom of circulation
Short-term admission + possibility to convert stay permit
Irregular entry + regularisation


Demand-driven systems
Selection in sending country + recruitment in receiving country
Direct recruitment in sending country
Who manages the selection ?
Individual employers
Employers' organisations (e.g. Freshuelva)
Intermediation and temporary work agencies
Specialised receiving State's agencies (e.g. France's OMI)
Receiving country's consulates
International organisations
Sending State's authorities (on basis of bilateral agreements)

- Demand-driven systems presuppose capacity and readiness of the employer either to recruit abroad or to choose workers at distance (without direct encounter)
- Demand-driven systems generally require some sort of infrastructure (bureaucratic and/or electronic)
- Offer-driven systems are more flexible and less costly (in terms of direct management costs) but they can be less effective (in terms of actual matching rate)

- Demand-driven systems (DDS) and offer-driven systems (ODS) have different vocations:
- DDS can be appropriate for well-organised and sufficiently big employers
- DDS can be appropriate for high-skilled jobs, where the relevant qualities of the workers can be assessed at distance
- ODS are certainly more appropriate (both efficient and effective) for small employers and for low-skilled jobs
- But ODS generally allow less control on individuals, including for security reasons

Heterogeneity of MS admission systems

- Very different overall levels of legal admission (Tab. 1)
- Very different policies for the admission of low-skilled foreign workers (Tab. 2)
- Very different approach to regularisation as a tool of migration management (ex post admission) (Tab. 3)

Tab. 1: The 5 largest countries of legal immigration in the European Union (net migration, 000s, 2003-5)

Source: Eurostat

2003	**2004**	**2005**
Spain: 738.5	Spain: 610.1	Spain: 652.3
Italy: 600.6	Italy: 558.2	Italy: 338.1
United Kingdom: 260.5	United Kingdom: 203.6	United Kingdom: 196.3
Germany: 142.2	France: 105.0	France: 102.9
Portugal: 63.5	Germany: 81.8	Germany: 98.5

Tab. 2: Annual "ceilings" and country quotas in Italian economic admission policy (000s, 1998-2006)

	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06
Ceiling	58	58	83	89.4	79.5	79.5	79.5	159	340
Non-EU Seasonals	/	/	/	39.4	56	68.5	50	25	50
Country quotas	6	6	18	16.5	14	3.8	20.4	21	38.5

Tab. 3: Total regularised foreigners (collective schemes, not individual reg.), selected EU States, 000s, 1973-2006

BEL	FR	GR	IT	NL	POR	ESP	UK
65.5	270	722	1433.1	19.1	240.2	1258.6	2.2

TOTAL: 4010.5

Which rationale for a EU-wide policy?

- Boosting legal immigration as disincentive to illegal immigration? REJECTED
- Simplifying admission procedures? UNLIKELY
- Increasing Europe's attractiveness for highly skilled migrants? WORTH CONSIDERING
- Preventing unwanted secondary movements of migrants legally admitted to one MS? WEAK
- Other strategic justifications?

Outlooks and open questions

- A single admission system is, for the time being, unviable (and undesirable)

- Weakness of the Mutual Information Mechanism (MIM, established with Council Decision of 5 October 2006)

- The minimalist strategy contained in the December 2005 Policy Plan seems more reasonable (at least as far as the "green card" for highly skilled immigrants is concerned BUT need of targeted EU-led anti-brain drain cooperation programmes, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa)

- Large-scale admission for low/medium-skilled is unlikely to be harmonised in the medium term (key issue of admission for job searching). A spontaneous convergence could nevertheless take place