

The Politics of Immigration Beyond Liberal States

Immigration presents a fundamental challenge to the nation-state and is a top political priority for governments worldwide. Yet, knowledge on the politics of immigration remains largely limited to liberal states of the Global North. This book systematically compares immigration policy-making in authoritarian Morocco and democratizing Tunisia to theorize the role of political regimes in immigration politics. Drawing on extensive fieldwork and archival research, the study shows that immigration politics – how a state deals with ‘the other’ – offers a privileged lens into the inner workings of political regimes: It demonstrates that in Tunisia, restrictive policy continuity functioned as a safeguard for democratization, while in Morocco, liberal immigration reform was central to the monarchy’s authoritarian consolidation. The study also reveals that most policymaking dynamics around immigration do not depend on the type of political regime in place, but are inherent to the issues raised by immigration or to public policymaking in modern states. Connecting comparative politics, international relations and political sociology scholarship on migration across the Global North and Global South, the book seeks to provide scholars, students and practitioners with food for thought on the fascinating interplay between immigration, political regimes and modern statehood around the world.

Dr Katharina Natter is Assistant Professor in Political Science at Leiden University. In her research, she explores modern statehood through the lens of migration politics. Natter holds a PhD in political sociology from the University of Amsterdam, and a Research Masters in comparative politics from Sciences Po Paris. She previously worked at the International Migration Institute, University of Oxford and also serves on the board of the NGO Asylos.

The Politics of Immigration Beyond Liberal States

Morocco and Tunisia in Comparative Perspective

Katharina Natter

University of Leiden



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
 978-1-009-26261-3 — The Politics of Immigration Beyond Liberal States
 Katharina Natter
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009262613

DOI: 10.1017/9781009262668

© Katharina Natter 2023

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2023

First paperback edition 2024

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Names: Natter, Katharina, author.

Title: The politics of immigration beyond liberal states : Morocco and Tunisia in comparative perspective / Katharina Natter.

Description: Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2022. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022030479 (print) | LCCN 2022030480 (ebook) | ISBN 9781009262620 (hardback) | ISBN 9781009262613 (paperback) | ISBN 9781009262668 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Morocco—Emigration and immigration—Government policy. | Morocco—Emigration and immigration—Political aspects. | Tunisia—Emigration and immigration—Government policy. | Tunisia—Emigration and immigration—Political aspects. | Morocco—Politics and government—1999– | Tunisia—Politics and government—2011–

Classification: LCC JV8978 .N38 2022 (print) | LCC JV8978 (ebook) | DDC 325/.264—dc23/eng/20220830

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022030479>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022030480>

ISBN 978-1-009-26262-0 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-26261-3 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

*To the little bird I met in the courtyard of the house where
I stayed during my first fieldwork visit in the Oudayas,
Rabat, in January 2012.*

*And to all those little moments that never make it into a
book but that are essential to fill life with meaning and joy.*

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>Note on the Text</i>	xii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiii
1 Introduction	1
2 Theories on the Move	20
3 The Contrasting Cases of Morocco and Tunisia	44
4 Regime Continuity and Immigration Policy Change in Morocco	79
5 The Illiberal Paradox of Autocratic Policymaking	109
6 Regime Change and Immigration Policy Continuity in Tunisia	140
7 The Ambiguous Effects of Democratization	165
8 Immigration Politics and State Transformation	198
9 Conclusion	220
<i>Appendices</i>	229
<i>Notes</i>	257
<i>References</i>	265
<i>Index</i>	296

Figures

1.1 Polity, politics, policy	<i>page 5</i>
3.1 Annual Moroccan emigration to main destinations, 1965–2010	58
3.2 Annual Tunisian emigration to main destinations, 1965–2010	59
3.3 Recorded number of foreigners according to Moroccan census data, 1935–2014	65
3.4 Recorded number of foreigners according to Tunisian census data, 1906–2014	65
4.1 Format of work contract in 1949 (top) and 1965 (bottom)	80
5.1 ODTI flyer from 2014 encouraging migrants to regularize	116
A.1 Evolution of real GDP per capita, 1950–2017	233
A.2 International tourism, number of arrivals, 1995–2018	234
A.3 Foreign direct investment (net inflows, current USD), 1970–2019	234
A.4 Export volume index (2000 = 100), 1980–2018	235
A.5 Personal remittances received, 1975–2019	235
A.6 Changes in political systems, 1956–2018	236
A.7 Changes in electoral and liberal components of democracy, Morocco, 1956–2019	236
A.8 Changes in electoral and liberal components of democracy, Tunisia, 1956–2019	237

Tables

1.1	Morocco and Tunisia, a puzzling contrast	<i>page 3</i>
2.1	Categorizing immigration policymaking theories	23
3.1	Geographic distribution of Moroccan and Tunisian emigrants, 2012–2018, in per cent	61
3.2	Number of immigrants living in Morocco, by country of citizenship, 2004 and 2014	67
3.3	Number of immigrants living in Tunisia, by country of citizenship, 2004 and 2014	69
4.1	Budget of Moroccan ministries, 2011–2016 (selection), in billions of dirham	101
A.1	List of interviewed actors	230
A.2	Key socio-political developments and events related to immigration in Morocco	238
A.3	Morocco’s main legal and informal policy changes on immigration	240
A.4	National institutional changes related to immigration in Morocco	242
A.5	International activities and diplomatic developments around immigration in Morocco	243
A.6	Civil society developments on immigration in Morocco	245
A.7	Key socio-political developments and events related to immigration in Tunisia	247
A.8	Tunisia’s main legal and informal policy changes on immigration	249
A.9	National institutional changes related to immigration in Tunisia	252
A.10	International activities and diplomatic developments around immigration in Tunisia	253
A.11	Civil society developments on immigration in Tunisia	255

Acknowledgements

This book is the fruit of an intellectual and personal journey that started over a decade ago, back in 2009. At the time, I was spending one year in Cairo as part of my undergraduate degree at Sciences Po. My conversations with young Egyptians confronted me with my Western worldview and the biases I had so naturally incorporated while growing up and studying in Europe. As a nineteen-year-old, I also for the first time experienced the privileges of my Austrian passport and realized the obstacles to freedom of movement my Egyptian friends were facing. This prompted my initial interest in migration and the politics around it.

Living in France, where immigration from North Africa was constantly debated in politics and in private, I wanted to learn more about the other side of the coin: how immigration was talked about and dealt with on the southern Mediterranean shore. In my master's thesis, I therefore researched on the domestic politics around immigration in Morocco over the 2000s, which laid the ground for the theoretical questions investigated in this book.

Fast-forward to spring 2015. At that time, my position in the Determinants of International Migration (DEMIG) project of Hein de Haas at the International Migration Institute in Oxford came to an end, and I decided to join him for my PhD in his new project Migration as Development (MADE) at the University of Amsterdam.

The four years I worked on my thesis expanded not only my intellectual but also my life horizons: I tried to settle in Amsterdam and to create a 'home' after having moved around for so many years. I immersed myself in social and political life in Rabat and Tunis during intense fieldwork stays. And I was offered the unexpected chance to discover Brazil, a fascinating country that played an important yet intangible role in my family history and now became central to my life. What brought this exciting but also exhausting journey to life were the many wonderful people I met along the way.

First of all, I am deeply grateful to my many respondents in Morocco and Tunisia, particularly those who opened their address and telephone books for me, and without whom this research would not have been possible. You remain anonymous, but I hope you know how grateful

Acknowledgements

xi

I am. The insights, knowledge and experiences of my respondents build the foundation for this book on political regimes and immigration policy-making in Morocco and Tunisia, through which I hope to contribute to a collective academic effort of rethinking migration politics.

Over the years, I had the chance to pursue this research endeavour as part of a dynamic community of scholars whom I greatly admire. First and foremost, I am indebted to my mentors and PhD supervisors Hein de Haas, H  l  ne Thiollet and Rainer Baub  ck for pushing me to think bold while always seeking depth and precision. This book would also not be the same without the brilliant Natalie Welfens and Lea M  ller-Funk, who never ceased to share their wisdom with me and whose friendships I cherish so much. My thinking and research was also shaped and inspired by Feline Freier, Gerasimos Tsourapas, Samuel Schmidt, Luicy Pedroza, Saskia Bonjour, Fiona Adamson, Darshan Vigneswaran, Lorena Gazzotti, Federica Infantino and David Fitzgerald, whom I admire not only for pushing scholarly thinking on migration politics but also for creating a research field that is supportive, collegial and fun.

I am also grateful for the close friendships I made and wonderful colleagues I met in Amsterdam and now in Leiden, who shared this intellectual journey with me and made me feel at home in the Netherlands. Thank you Simona, Keri, Sonja, Flor, Ju, Sophie, Mijail, Tom, Corinna, Sander and Julia! *Shukran* also to Fede, Theo, Lorena, Tarik and all those who made my fieldwork interesting and fun! And *muito obrigada* to those who cheered me up every week without knowing – my jazz dance teachers, forró partners and samba drumming folks.

But what would this last decade have been like without my childhood and university friends – in order of appearance in my life: Paula, Julie, Yumi, Laura, Flo, Selina, Vero, Benni, Vincent, Magdi, Anca, Johanna, Johannes, Solveig, Maher, Marion, Jasper, Mariana, Leila, Franziska and Amr – who are spread across the world but have accompanied me from afar in my moments of euphoria as well as frustration, from Vienna, Frankfurt, London, Singapore, Stockholm, Brussels, Damascus, Florence, Vancouver, Berlin, Zürich and elsewhere!

Finally, I could not have sustained the energy for this project without my family – Barbara, Ehrenfried, Kornelia and Fernando. Thank you for loving me unconditionally, listening to me, giving me the right advice when I need it and always making me feel at home, be it in Vienna, Amsterdam or Recife.

And Fernando, thank you for making my life lighter when it feels heavy, for leading by example in living a life guided by kindness, respect and curiosity, and most of all for not being afraid to take the risks that spending our lives together entails.

Note on the Text

This book brings together my insights from a decade of research on migration policies and political change in North Africa and beyond. It is based on my PhD thesis, which was written as part of the Migration as Development (MADE) project at the University of Amsterdam and funded by the European Community's Horizon 2020 Program under ERC Grant Agreement 648496. The book draws on extensive fieldwork I conducted in Morocco and Tunisia during 2011–2012 and 2016–2017, as well as on archival, policy and media analysis up until the end of 2020. French or Arabic quotes from primary or secondary sources have been translated into English by myself. All errors are mine.

Abbreviations

ADESGUIM	Association for the Development and Sensitization of Guineans in Morocco
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AESAT	Association of African Students and Trainees in Tunisia
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFVIC	Friends and Families of Victims of Clandestine Migration
AI	Amnesty International
ALECMA	Association Light on Irregular Emigration in the Maghreb
AMAPPE	Moroccan Association for the Support and Promotion of Small Enterprises
AMDH	Moroccan Association of Human Rights
AMERM	Moroccan Association for Studies and Research on Migrations
ANAPEC	National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Competences
ANETI	National Agency for Employment and Independent Work
ASTT	Association of Sub-Saharan Workers in Tunisia
ATFD	Tunisian Association of Democratic Women
ATMF	Association of Maghreb Workers in France
BRA	Bureau of Refugees and Stateless People
CCDH	Consultative Council on Human Rights
CCSM	Collective of Sub-Saharan Communities in Morocco
CEJJ	Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies
CGEM	General Confederation of Enterprises in Morocco
CGTT	General Confederation of Tunisian Workers
CMSM	Council of Sub-Saharan Migrants in Morocco
CNDH	National Council on Human Rights
CSO	Civil Society Organization

xiv List of Abbreviations

CTMM	Collective of Migrant Workers in Morocco
CTR	Tunisian Council for Refugees
DGCIM	General Directorate for International Co-operation on Migration
DIDH	Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights
EU	European Union
FIDH	International Human Rights Federation
FOO	Orient-Occident Foundation
FTDES	Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights
GADEM	Anti-Racist Defense and Support Group of Foreigners and Migrants
GIZ	German Development Agency
IADH	Arab Institute for Human Rights
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IO	International Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LTDH	Tunisian League for Human Rights
MCMREAM	Ministry for the Moroccan Community Abroad and Migration Affairs
MdM-B	Doctors of the World Belgium
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEPF	Ministry of Employment and Professional Training
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MP	Member of Parliament
MRE	Moroccans Residing Abroad
MSF	Doctors Without Borders
NCA	National Constituent Assembly
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODT/ODTI	Democratic Organization of (Immigrant) Labour
OMDH	Moroccan Organization of Human Rights
ONM	National Migration Observatory
OTE	Office for Tunisians Abroad

List of Abbreviations

xv

PJD	Justice and Development Party
RAMED	Medical Assistance Regime in Morocco
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation Agency
SEMTE	State Secretariat for Migration and Tunisians Abroad
SNIA	National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum
SNM	National Migration Strategy
TAT	Terre d’Asile Tunisie
TRE	Tunisians Residing Abroad
UGTT	General Union of Tunisian Workers
ULA	Union of African Leaders
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissariat for Refugees
UTICA	Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Crafts