

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.

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The Politics of Immigration Beyond Liberal States

Morocco and Tunisia in Comparative Perspective

Katharina Natter

University of Leiden



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 or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
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*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.*

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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.

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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.

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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 |

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| | |
|----------|--|
| 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

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| | |
|-------|--|
| 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 |

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