Political regimes and immigration policymaking

The contrasting cases of Morocco and Tunisia

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Publication date
2019
Document Version
Other version
License
Other

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Natter, K. (2019). *Political regimes and immigration policymaking: The contrasting cases of Morocco and Tunisia*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

Theories on the move

ABSTRACT

This chapter outlines the intellectual debates that this thesis engages in and seeks to contribute to. It starts with a reflection on theory-building and the global political economy of knowledge production, arguing that theoretical innovation on immigration policymaking is best achieved (1) by bringing in new empirical material that allows social scientists to challenge and refine established theories, as well as (2) by engaging in comparative research across political geographies and political regimes.

The chapter positions the thesis in the fields of migration studies, public policy research, comparative politics, and political sociology. First, it engages with the literature on state formation and public policymaking, which is strongly segmented along world regions or regime types. It defines key concepts – such as the polity and the state, democracy and autocracy, politicization and agenda-setting – and delineates what falls under immigration policy in the context of this research. Second, the chapter critically assesses the contributions and limitations of existing theories on immigration policymaking in 'Western liberal democracies', and maps the more recent empirical works on immigration politics in the so-called 'Global South' that provide the starting point for this thesis.

The chapter hereby sets the scene for investigating how political regime dynamics such as autocratic consolidation and democratization shaped immigration policymaking in Morocco and Tunisia over the past decades. In Chapter 11, I return to the theoretical questions introduced here and tease out similarities and differences in immigration policymaking across the 'Western/non-Western' and 'democratic/autocratic' divides to foster more systematic and general theory-building on immigration policymaking.

1 THEORY-BUILDING AND THE GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMY OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

This thesis contributes to a wider academic effort of bridging the gap in the study of socio-political processes in the 'Global South' and the 'Global North'. Indeed, concepts such as the 'Global South' (or its conceptual cousins the third world, developing world, or non-West) suffer from theoretical futility: They cover countries as economically, politically, geographically, and culturally different as Morocco, Indonesia, Chile, or Kazakhstan. Depending on the indicator chosen – income levels, human development, geography, or geopolitical alliances – the lines demarcating 'Global North' from 'Global South' shift (Bakewell 2009). Thus, the 'Global South' is not defined substantially, through a shared set of characteristics, but relationally, through its opposition to and history of colonialization by the 'Global North' (Bakewell 2009; Comaroff and Comaroff 2012: 127).[8] The rationale for analytically separating the 'West' from the 'Rest' thus seems primarily rooted in global power dynamics. A short detour on the politics of knowledge production is necessary to explain what these terminologies entail for social scientific theory-building.

Social theory is about making sense of the regularities and patterns of what is out there in the world. Like novels, whose specific and particular stories can speak to readers across space and time if they get at the core of human and societal relations, social theory can be universal. At the same time, it is never finished. It is continuously evolving as new people join the endeavour and bring in their worldviews and experiences. However, social theory reflects global power structures, particularly when it comes to which research questions are investigated and who can contribute to theory-building. In migration studies, the political economy of research, with most resources concentrated in Europe and North America, explains the disproportional attention to migration policymaking in 'Western liberal democracies' and the resulting claim of their specificity. Also, categories such as 'origin' and 'destination' country or 'South-South' migration are mainly power constructs: Bakewell (2009: 59) reminds us that "this exercise to mark out South-South migration as a different, perhaps exotic, form of migration can be seen as contributing to the contemporary reproduction of the North/South separation and its asymmetrical power relations".[9]

Criticism of Euro- or Western-centrism in social theory is not new (Wallerstein 1997). Over the past decades, postcolonial scholars – both from within and outside the West – have criticized the Western monopoly of knowledge and the assumption

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8   As I have argued elsewhere (Natter 2018b), the term 'West' - or its pendants the first world, the developed world or the 'Global North' - are rarely (if ever) explicitly defined or theorized. The terms are used as shortcuts to capture an 'exclusive club' of countries - essentially North and Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, but sometimes also Southern and Eastern Europe or South Korea and Japan. Substantive reasons for grouping these countries under the same conceptual header are seldom advanced, limiting the analytical value of the concept and blurring differences within this heterogeneous category.
9   For an early critical analysis of the geopolitics of knowledge production in refugee studies, see Chimni (1998).

that a 'universal social theory' could be based on Western experiences only. However, the field is divided between wanting to 'decolonize' or 'open up' the social sciences (Bhambra and de Sousa Santos 2017; Mignolo 2002). On the one hand, scholars have highlighted the diversity of epistemologies around the globe and advocated 'provincializing' knowledge (Chakrabarty 2000; de Sousa Santos 2014) or 'decolonizing' theory (Mignolo 2002). Ultimately, this approach abandons the ambition of generalizability. On the other hand, scholars have called for revising and expanding theories from a Southern perspective to move towards more global social science (Bhambra 2014; Connell 2007; Krotz 2005).[10]

The idea of plural epistemologies and provincialized theories might be appealing, but in my view it would ultimately fail to move beyond artificial, dichotomous world categorizations, as experiences around the world would continue to be analysed through different theoretical lenses. Keeping up the dialogue between different ways of analysing the world remains crucial. The ideal outcome of such a dialogue would be, as Bhambra (2014) outlines, not merely to add new elements to existing theory, but to build new theory through novel empirical input. What would this imply? First, it would require breaking the unidirectional transfer of theory from 'North' to 'South' and to foster theoretical innovation through 'reciprocal comparisons' (Austin 2007; Pomeranz 2000).[11] As Comaroff and Comaroff (2012: 114) suggest, "the so-called 'Global South' […] affords privileged insight into the workings of the world at large".[12]

Second, this approach would invite us to open our eyes to similarities where we would not expect them. The resulting general social science could blur the lines between pre-fixed, politically constructed categories, and instead focus on theoretically more relevant divisions that are grounded in the (dis)similarities of patterned social relations around the globe. With regards to dynamics and outcomes of immigration politics, the structure of the labour market, the domestic legitimation strategies of political elites, or the state's geopolitical embedding might have more explanatory power than a country's categorization as 'Global South/Global North' or 'democracy/autocracy'.

This approach to theory-building is in line with Portes (1997: 810-812 who has argued that the way forward in migration studies is not to come up with a 'grand theory' that would explain all migratory processes at all times and places. Instead, he calls for

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10   'Southern theories' generally refer to social theory-building by scholars in or from the 'Global South'. As an Austrian working in the Netherlands, I can therefore not contribute to 'decolonizing' theories from the South. My work can only decentre social scientific inquiry by bringing different empirical insights into dominant Northern theoretical debates.
11   According to Pomeranz (2000: 8), reciprocal comparisons require "viewing both sides of the comparison as 'deviations' when seen through the expectations of the other, rather than leaving one as always the norm."
12   In *Theory from the South* they reverse the traditional perspective in which the North serves as a prototype for understanding the world at large, and processes in the 'Global South' in particular. They argue, instead, that developments in the 'Global South' are forecasting global developments. While this is a compelling proposition that I very much sympathize with, it continues to reify the division between the 'West' and the 'Rest'. Instead, I suggest that the dialogue between theory-building and empirical insights from different geographical, economic, developmental, political, or cultural contexts is key to moving beyond binary distinctions of West/non-West, democracy/autocracy, developed/developing country, Northern/Southern.

developing 'middle-range theories' (Merton 1949)[13] based on the wealth of empirical research around the world to better delineating the applicability (or scope conditions) of existing theories and to foster theoretical innovation.[14] Advancing middle-range theorizing on immigration politics is the ambition of this thesis. To set the theoretical frame for this endeavour, this rest of this chapter outlines the key concepts of polity, politics and policy that underpin my argument and reviews the literature on immigration policymaking that provides the starting point for my empirical investigation.

2   EXPLORING THE POLITY-POLITICS-POLICY NEXUS ON IMMIGRATION

In researching Moroccan and Tunisian immigration policymaking, I engage with the three conceptual components of 'the political': the polity, i.e the formal and informal institutions structuring a political community; politics, i.e. the decision-making processes and power dynamics among actors; and policy, i.e. the substance of political action (Leca 2012: 61-63). More specifically, the thesis explores how polity, politics and policy interact with and influence each other in the field of immigration in Morocco and Tunisia. Figure 2 shows the inherent interconnectedness of these three components of the political that provide the conceptual framework of this thesis.

FIGURE 2: Polity, Politics, Policy

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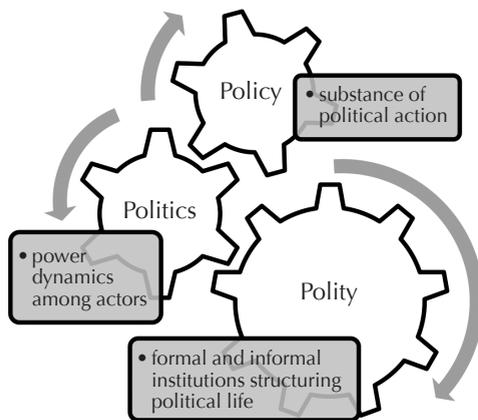
13   In his seminal work, Merton defined middle-range theories as "theories that lie between the minor but necessary working hypotheses that evolve in abundance during day-to-day research and the all-inclusive systematic efforts to develop a unified theory that will explain all the observed uniformities of social behavior, social organization, and social change. […] Middle-range theory involves abstractions, of course, but they are close enough to observed data to be incorporated in propositions that permit empirical testing" (Merton 1949: 39).
14   Scope conditions are "statements that define the circumstances in which a theory is applicable" (Cohen 1989: 83; Harris 1997: 123). Specifying the scope conditions of theories lies at the heart of social scientific research, as "through the increasing specification of theoretical statements and attendant conditions science progresses" (Harris 1997: 127).

2.1 THE POLITY

A polity is a human community that asserts a collective identity and operates within a defined institutional setting (Leca 2012: 61-63). It encompasses both the power structures that are captured in terms such as 'political institutions' or 'political regime', as well as the collection of people bound by an (imagined, symbolic) sense of belonging that is captured by concepts such as 'nation' or 'society'. As an overarching term, polities can take the form of a tribe, an empire, or – most relevant for my research – a state.

States, societies, and the state-in-society approach

States are the dominant form of organizing power relations within the modern polity. In line with historical institutionalist scholars who sought to 'bring the state back in' (Skocpol 1985) to social science research as an independent analytical variable, this thesis investigates how similarities and differences in statehood around the world shape immigration politics. But what exactly does the state concept capture?

Most prominently, Weber (2009 [1919]: 78) defined the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory". In this view, the state is a bureaucratic machinery that collects taxes, produces statistics, and is protected by a standing army (Levi 2002; Tilly 1992). Control over the movement of people across borders – nationals and foreigners alike – is thus crucial for state formation and consolidation (Torpey 1997; Torpey 2000; Zolberg 1978). Culturalist approaches complement this institutional perspective by highlighting the theatrical element of the state, such as the role of rituals and norms in legitimizing state power: Geertz (1980) has argued that 'culture' in the form of values or a national master narrative provides the 'glue' that fosters people's adherence to the state. Similarly, Anderson (1983) emphasized the role of print media in creating 'imagined communities' that provide the basis for modern nationalism. Thus, setting the boundaries of citizenship and belonging to the polity is crucial for consolidating the power of the nation-state. Following Mitchell (1999: 77) who argued that "the state-idea and the state-system are better seen as two aspects of the same process," this thesis looks both at the cultural-ideological and institutional-material aspects of the state.

In parallel to the vast literature on the modern (Western) state, regionalists and comparative politics scholars have worked on the 'Arab state' (Anderson 1987; Ayubi 1995c; Owen 2004; Salamé 2002) and on the 'African state' (Bayart 2009; Bierschenk and de Sardan 2015; Herbst 2000; Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Young 1994).[15] Much of this research has focused on teasing out the specificities of Arab or African states,

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15   Interestingly, research on the state in Africa and the Middle East has evolved into two rather distinct literatures. Maghreb countries are often not part of either, being respectively at the northern and western fringes of these areas.

of their origin, formation, and functioning, in comparison to the ideal-typical 'Western' state. For instance, African states are often portrayed as dominated by family dynamics, kinship or ethnic groups, as well as informal institutions; while studies on the Arab state have tended to over-state local peculiarities such as (neo)patrimonialism and rentierism. Scholars have also highlighted the different meanings of the state concept itself: In Latin, 'state' refers to stability and continuity, while its Arabic counterpart '*dawla*' signals circulation and changes in power (Ayubi 1995a: 15). This emphasis on difference and on the 'cultural' determinants of statehood has unfortunately obstructed systematic theoretical inquiries into the nature of statehood more generally. It has also resulted, as stated by Bierschenk and de Sardan (2015: 54) in the case of African states, in "a tendency to exoticize states of the South by comparing actual practices in the South with an idealized notion of how things work in the North".

Research on civil society mirrors these debates on the state: Originating in classical Western political thought (for instance: de Tocqueville 1835/2006; Gramsci 1971; Putnam 1993), anthropologists, comparative politics and area studies scholars have explored the extent to which the concept of civil society travels across political systems, cultures and geographies (Ayubi 1995b; Bayat 2010; Bellin 1994; Harbeson, Rothchild and Chazan 1994; Keane 1999; Lewis 2002). This debate has become particularly relevant since the 1990s due to the normative charge of the civil society concept – seen by some as "the bulwark of freedom and anti-totalitarianism" and by others as "the spearhead of Western imperialism" (Bellin 1994: 509). Given the central role attached to civil society in democratization theory, the term is not only used by societal actors themselves who want to legitimize their presence in the public sphere, but also by international donors and IOs who pursue a development and democratization agenda in failed or weak state contexts, as well as by autocratic state leaders who seek to showcase the openness and modernity of their political systems.

In the context of North Africa and the Middle East, civil society has been studied through similar analytical lenses as the state, through (neo)patrimonialism, confessional or tribal allegiances, as well as the role of Western interventions (Ayubi 1995b; Norton 1994; 1995). In particular, the existence of 'uncivil' or 'illiberal' civil society actors and practices has been central to setting boundaries and defining the term 'civil society' (Abdel Rahman 2002; Englehart 2011). In the wake of the 2011 'Arab Spring', research investigating the margin of manoeuvre of civil society in authoritarian contexts has gained momentum (Cavatorta 2012; Lewis 2013). On the one hand, scholars argue that civil society activism fulfils a fundamentally different role in autocracies and can bolster the legitimation of autocratic regimes (Aarts and Cavatorta 2013; Allal 2016; Jamal 2007). On the other hand, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have successfully pressured the state, driving democratization from below or mobilizing transnational advocacy networks despite the authoritarian context (Grän-

zer 1999; Moghadam 2018). I engage in those debates by looking at the leverage and role played by Moroccan and Tunisian civil society actors involved in claims-making on immigration.[16]

To conceptualize the Moroccan and Tunisian polity, I draw on the 'state-in-society' approach (Migdal 1988; Migdal 2001; Migdal and Schlichte 2005) that emphasizes the plurality of the state – the fact that it displays a broad range of inherently multiple and fragmented practices beyond its image as a unitary, coherent, and rational actor – and that posits state institutions as independent, but socially embedded actors that are in constant struggle over power in society (for more detail see Chapter 3, Section 1.1). While I draw an analytical line between state and civil society actors, I acknowledge and will show through my case studies how this line is permeable and constantly transgressed – as state and civil society actors switch sides, are part of similar epistemic communities, and are interdependent on each other's support for survival.

Democracy, autocracy, and everything in-between

To grasp how the transformations of the Moroccan and Tunisian polities have shaped immigration politics over time, I also draw on the political regime literature.[17] In particular, I engage with research on dynamics of regime change and democratization, as well as on what is commonly referred to in the literature as 'regime survival', namely authoritarian consolidation and legitimation.[18]

Traditionally, a democracy is pinned down on three criteria: "competition, participation, and accountability" (Karl 1990: 15). It involves free and fair elections, as well as universal suffrage; various channels of popular political participation (such as parties or CSOs); and government accountability to the people. To qualify as liberal democracy, civil and political individual rights, as well as the rule of law also need to be safeguarded (Dahl 1971; Schmitter and Karl 1991; Schumpeter 1943). In contrast, there is no undisputed definition of authoritarianism (or autocracy).[19] The most influ-

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16   In doing so, I adopt a non-normative, actor-centred definition of civil society, understood as the web of associational life (made of NGOs, grassroots associations, unions or interest groups) that pursue collective purposes outside of state institutions (Bellin 1995: 125). For a good overview of the use and misuse of the term civil society (*al-mujtama' al-madani* in Arabic), with a focus on the Arab world, see Bellin (1995: 120-123).

17   Following the definition by Schmitter and Karl (1991: 4), I will use the notions of 'political regime' and 'political system' interchangeably. However, it remains important to distinguish political regimes from states and governments. For Ayoubi (1995: 31), "regimes are more permanent forms of political organization than specific governments, but they are typically less permanent than the state."

18   The term 'regime survival' is central to the political science literature on political regime consolidation and change. While I draw on this literature, I find the term 'survival' misleading in two ways: First, because the term emerged out of the realist research tradition, it personifies the state and thus disregards the multiplicity and heterogeneity of actors making up the state. Second, it suggests the presence of an existential regime crisis. More often, however, regimes are faced with securing their institutional stability, territorial integrity or political legitimacy. In the remainder of this thesis, I therefore refrain from talking about regime survival and instead use more specific terms such as regime legitimation, regime stability or authoritarian consolidation depending on the context.

19   I will use the notions of 'autocracy' and 'authoritarianism' interchangeably.

ential conceptualization is that of Linz (2000 [1975]), defining authoritarianism through limited political pluralism, a distinctive mentality rather than ideology, low levels of political mobilization, and ill-defined but predictable limits to the exercise of political power. More often however, autocratic systems are negatively defined as lacking all or some of the criteria for democracy (Glasius 2015; 2018b).

Over the past decades, research on regime types and regime change has advanced on four significant points: First, scholars have developed more nuanced definitions of authoritarianism, advancing regime typologies that distinguish monarchies from single-party, bureaucratic, or military autocracies according to their different strategies for political legitimation and stability (for good overviews, see: Alvarez et al. 1996; Brooker 2014; Geddes 1999; Gerschewski 2013). Second, political scientists have introduced hybrid concepts such as illiberal democracies (Zakaria 1997), liberalized autocracy (Brumberg 2002), competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way 2002), or pseudo-democracy (Diamond 2002) in reaction to insights that democratic institutions can exist within authoritarian regimes and even consolidate them. Indeed, the proportion of so-called 'hybrid' regimes that portray both democratic and autocratic features has doubled over the 1990s (Diamond 1999: 24-28). Thirdly, and complementing these conceptual developments, quantitative scholars have created indices that capture political regimes on a spectrum spanning from hereditary monarchy through mixed or incoherent regimes to consolidated democracy (see PolityIV Project (Marshall, Gurr and Jaggers 2018)), or that differentiate between 'closed autocracy', 'electoral autocracy', 'electoral democracy' and 'liberal democracy' (see V-Dem Project (Coppedge et al. 2018; Pemstein et al. 2018)). Lastly, studies on regime change have sought to explain dynamics of democratization as well as democratic backsliding or authoritarian relapses by looking at the strength of civil society, the historical legacies of state formation, economic inequalities, or the elites' dependence on external actors (Brownlee 2007; Geddes 1999; Levitsky and Way 2005; Teorell 2010).

In line with these conceptual developments, I approach political systems as a spectrum of practices and institutions between liberal democracy on the one hand, and closed authoritarianism on the other, rather than trying to squeeze political realities into either the democratic or the autocratic box (Collier and Adcock 1999). Within this spectrum, Morocco's hereditary monarchy and Tunisia's presidential one-party autocracy have shifted back and forth over time according to levels of repression and political freedoms, with Tunisia experiencing a qualitative jump towards democratization in 2011 (see Figure A 12 and Figure A 14). While others have looked at how migration drives political change and revolution in the context of the 2011 'Arab Spring' (de Haas and Sigona 2012; Thiollet 2015), I focus on how regime change and consolidation throughout 2011 drove immigration policymaking dynamics: The Moroccan case gives insights into how immigration politics can be part and parcel of

authoritarian stability and legitimation strategies; Tunisia showcases what democratization and regime change do to immigration politics.

At the same time, this thesis shows that not all observed immigration policymaking dynamics can be explained by political regime dynamics. This is for instance the case for the strikingly similar inter-institutional dynamics I observed in Morocco and Tunisia. To better understand these, I expand the discussion of the role of the polity in policymaking beyond the question of regime type. Indeed, the position of a state on the democracy-autocracy spectrum covers just one feature of statehood. Other characteristics, such as a state's bureaucratic capacity (Hanson 2018),[20] the number of veto players within the state (Tsebelis 2002),[21] or elite strategies to assure political legitimation[22] also shape the policy process. Indeed, the safeguarding of regime legitimacy and territorial or institutional stability are particularly critical components of statehood regardless of the political system. Although the sources of legitimacy and means of preserving stability vary across countries, "no political regime or authority wishes to appear illegitimate" (Mazepus et al. 2016: 350). As I will show throughout this thesis, regime strategies to secure legitimacy and stability critically shape the immigration policymaking and policy outcomes regardless of the political regime in place.

More generally, this thesis seeks to bridge analytical insights from different statehood literatures. As highlighted by Tilly (1992), social sciences tend to focus on the differences in state formation while disregarding fundamental similarities in modern statehood around the world, such as the fact that, worldwide, state administrations are structured along ministries and modelled upon the European nation-state in their institutional set-up and fundamental logic. Although the trajectories, logics and practices of statehood vary across contexts, similarities in formal state models offer theoretical grounds for expecting more commonalities in policymaking across polities than dichotomous theorizations of democratic and autocratic politics would suggest.

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20   The term state capacity defines "the ability of state institutions to effectively implement official goals" (Hanson 2018: 5) along three dimensions: extractive, coercive and administrative capacity: "[Extractive capacity] include[s] the legibility of the population, the capacity to gather and maintain information, and the presence of administrative agents to carry out these functions ably. Coercive capacity reflects the ability of the state to dominate society, maintain order within its borders, apply force to overcome opposition, and defend the territory from external threat. Finally, administrative capacity involves the ability to design and implement policies throughout the territory, and regulate the social and economic spheres" (Hanson 2018: 5).
21   Veto players are individuals or institutions whose agreement is necessary to change the status quo in a political system (Tsebelis 2002). As a result, policy stability (or reform deadlock) increases with the number of veto players.
22   Political legitimation seeks "to guarantee active consent, compliance with the rules, passive obedience, or mere toleration within the population" (Gerschewski 2013: 18). Weber (1919) distinguishes three types of legitimacy: traditional legitimacy based on historical continuity or customs, charismatic legitimacy based on the ideas and personality of a leader, and rational-legal legitimacy, based on institutionalized rules and procedures that determine access to political power. While democracies mainly rely on institutions and a rational-legal legitimacy, autocracies often rely on a combination of popular legitimation through a political ideology, a leader's charisma and socio-economic performance, repression of opposition actors and the co-optation of specific elites through patronage or clientelism to assure regime stability (Gerschewski 2013).

2.2 POLITICS

Politics designates the power relations embedded in state-society interactions that unfold within a polity. Although "politics is everywhere" (Squires 2004: 119), for the purpose of this thesis I adopt a classical institutionalist definition of politics as "the state in action" (Hassenteufel 2008: 5). Thus, my investigation of immigration politics in Morocco and Tunisia covers politicization and policymaking processes, focusing on dynamics between administrative and societal actors at the domestic and international levels.

Politicization, agenda setting and framing

Politicization captures "the process that turns a problem into a legitimate object of public action" (Boussaguet, Jacquot and Ravinet 2010: 535). In public policy and political sociology research, politicization is usually conceptualized through two dimensions: salience and polarization (De Wilde 2011; Hutter and Grande 2014; van der Brug et al. 2015). A topic becomes politicized when its salience increases in the public sphere and when it is subject to divergent positions and conflict among actors. This process can be either driven by public authorities (top-down politicization), or by societal actors (bottom-up politicization). In democracies, politicization manifests itself in partisan politics or societal debates and is usually accompanied by an expansion of the institutional and civil society actors involved in the issue.

In contrast, depoliticization is not simply the absence of politicization. It can be a 'political strategy' for societal actors or a 'mode of statecraft' for political leaders to deflect from the antagonism on a particular issue and to remove their responsibility to address it (Flinders and Buller 2006; Wood and Flinders 2014). Depoliticization, as we will see in the case of Tunisia, involves not only a shift towards technocratic politics that privileges best practices and international expertise, but also a strategic laissez-faire policy and the discursive sidelining of immigration by state actors and parts of civil society.

Dynamics of (de)politicization, then, provide the bridge between the societal and political arena and precede the formal policy process of agenda-setting, decision-making and implementation.[23] However, politicization and policy change are not necessarily correlated: Not all politicization processes lead to a change in policy substance, and policy continuity does not necessarily indicate the absence of politicization. Thus, investigating politicization and policy processes separately is critical. In

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23   One of the most influential conceptualizations of the policy cycle is Jones' (1970) sequential model, suggesting that policymaking occurs in distinct stages: the emergence of a public problem, agenda setting, decision-making, implementation, and policy evaluation. As this ideal-type of the policy cycle is rarely found in the messy reality of policymaking, alternative theorizations such as the 'garbage can model' (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972) or the 'policy streams approach' (Kingdon 2003) have highlighted the more irrational, chaotic, or context-specific aspects of policymaking. Nonetheless, Jones' sequential model remains central in most policy analyses up to today. For a detailed literature review on the policy process, see Chapters 4-7 of the Handbook of Public Policy Analysis (Fischer and Miller 2006).

particular, grasping which actors and interests are involved in qualifying or disqualifying immigration (or certain immigrant groups) as object of political concern is crucial to understand subsequent agenda setting and decision-making. In investigating immigration policymaking in Morocco and Tunisia, I therefore differentiate between the drivers of politicization, agenda setting, decision-making, and implementation, and specify the extent to which political regime dynamics shape each of these stages.

To conceptualize the stage of agenda setting, I draw upon the work of Cobb, Ross and Ross (1976: 127-128) who have theorized three models of agenda setting: (1) the outside initiative model, whereby a public problem is successfully pushed by civil society groups onto the political agenda; (2) the mobilization model, whereby an issue is initiated inside government and subsequently expanded to the public agenda by the government's active framing of the issue as a public problem; and (3) the inside initiative model,[24] whereby an issue arises within the governmental sphere, but – as a deliberate strategy of policymakers – never reaches the public agenda. Historically, liberal immigration policies in Europe have been characterized by the inside initiative model, as decision-makers tried to keep policymaking 'behind closed doors' given that liberalizations were likely to be unpopular with the electorate (Freeman 1995; Triadafilopoulos and Zaslove 2006). As I will show, the mobilization model characterizes immigration politics in Morocco since the early 2000s, while the outside and inside initiative models compete in Tunisia's post-2011 immigration politics.

In addition to these three agenda setting models, the literature on policy externalization or 'remote control' within migration studies (Boswell 2003; Lahav and Guiraudon 2000; Zolberg 1999), suggests a fourth dynamic: (4) the external initiative model, whereby agenda setting is initiated outside the national sphere. As I will demonstrate, the international dimension shapes national policymaking not only because diplomatic actors or international organizations (IOs) exert pressures on national policymakers. National authorities also actively leverage international dynamics for their own interests through 'issue linkage' (Tollison and Willett 1979),[25] and they are influenced by transnational trends and 'policy diffusion' mechanisms (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Shipan and Volden 2008).[26] Figure 3 schematizes these models.

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24   Other authors have labeled this model "inversed agenda setting" (Favre, 1992: 14; Kingdon, 2003: 206).
25   Issue linkage refers to a negotiation practice in international relations through which agreement on one issue is made dependant on agreement on another issue. Within migration studies, issue linkage has been investigated most prominently in relation to a country's foreign policy or economic cooperation interests.
26   Policy diffusion occurs when different countries adopt similar policies on the same issue. This is more frequent among countries where policymakers and bureaucrats are part of the same 'epistemic community', such as within the European Union or other regional organizations. Within migration studies, policy diffusion or convergence has been evidenced extensively (see for instance Cornelius, Martin and Hollifield (1994) or FitzGerald and Cook-Martín (2014)).

FIGURE 3: Four models of agenda setting
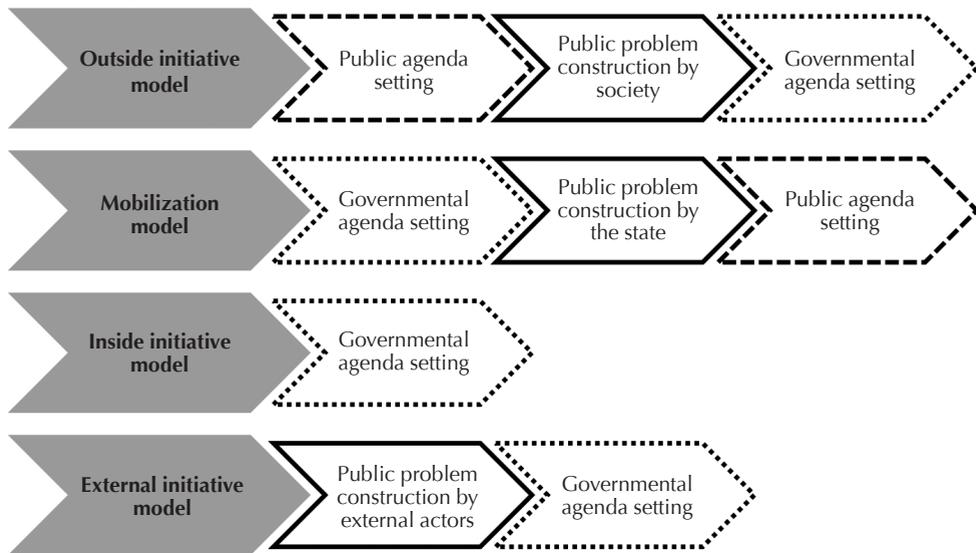
In these processes of politicization and agenda setting, actors have to legitimize their discourses and positions in the public sphere by framing them accordingly.[27] In his seminal work on discourse, Habermas (1993) suggested three main framing strategies used by political actors: (1) the pragmatic frame, based on the utilitarian interests of actors involved; (2) the ethical frame, based on shared political ideals; and (3) the moral frame, based on universal ideas such as human rights. In Morocco and Tunisia, actors adopt different framing strategies depending on their interests and the broader context within which they seek to set immigration on the agenda or to justify specific policy decisions.

Interests, ideas, institutions: Analytical tools for global policy analysis

These theorizations of policymaking have emerged in reference to 'Western liberal democracies'. In parallel, a smaller research field has developed around 'non-Western' (Almond and Coleman 1960; Diamant 1959; Horowitz 1989; Osman 2002; Pye 1958) or 'authoritarian' policy processes (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Kinne 2005). This literature has remained inconclusive as to whether policy processes fundamentally differ from those observed in 'Western liberal democracies': Some studies highlight similarities, such as the role of path-dependency or the need to accommodate an electorate – or a 'selectorate' (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003)[28] – through policies,

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27   Framing refers to a process whereby actors "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient […], in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman 1993: 52).

28   Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) have prominently argued that all regimes need to secure their legitimacy through support by a 'selectorate'. While in democracies, this might be the majority of the electorate, autocratic

while others point at structural differences regarding the origin of political legitimacy or state capacities for policy implementation.

So far, only few researchers have attempted to understand policy processes around the world with shared research tools: Varshney (1989) analysed India's agricultural policy in the mid-1960s by delving inside the state. He shows that while inter-institutional conflict between political leaders and bureaucrats was at the core of policy formulation, civil society and foreign actors' interests particularly impacted policy implementation. Also Grindle and Thomas (1991) embed their empirical analysis of changes in economic policy of developing countries in general public policy theories. They show that bureaucratic interactions, concerns about political stability and international leverage, as well as contextual elements determined the margins of manoeuvre of political elites and the successful implementation of a policy. Finally, anthropologists who have researched policymaking through the lens of development and aid programmes since the 1980s have started to study their public policymaking more generally (for a comprehensive review, see De Sardan 2015).

Notwithstanding these case studies and developments, a systematic comparison of policy processes across political systems or political geographies is lacking so far. Through the case of immigration policymaking in Morocco and Tunisia, this thesis contributes to a more general perspective on policy processes by adopting a comprehensive approach to public policymaking that looks simultaneously at interests, ideas, and institutions (for a detailed explanation of the so-called '3i approach', see: Hall 1997; Palier and Surel 2005): (1) 'Interests' refers to the preferences of actors within and outside the political system, and the coalitions they form to pursue them. (2) 'Ideas' designates the knowledge, norms, and values that inform how actors define a problem and perceive different policy options, depending on individual preferences, institutional cultures, or national societal norms. (3) 'Institutions' denotes the political environment – the "formal and informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 938) – that constrains, enables, and shapes the policy process. This includes factors such as governmental structures, state capacity, number of veto points, or the weight of path dependency.[29] As mentioned above, the fact that states worldwide are modelled upon the modern, European nation-state (Tilly 1992) suggests fundamental similarities in policymaking dynamics across world regions and polities.

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regimes are sustained by different coalitions of domestic actors. The authors highlight that dynamics of political legitimacy do not differ as fundamentally across regime types as is often suggested. However, they argue that the distinct institutional arrangement of each state structures the relationship between political leaders and their domestic supporters.

29   Path dependency captures more than just 'history matters'. It refers to the fact that bureaucratic decisions of the past shape and limit future policy options: "Once a country or region has started down a track, the costs of reversal are very high. There will be other choice points, but the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct an easy reversal of the initial choice" (Levi 1997: 28).

2.3 (IMMIGRATION) POLICIES

To close off the conceptualization of the polity-politics-policy trio, I delineate the precise subject of my investigation: immigration policies.

Defining immigration policy

Public policies are the substantive outcomes of the political game that, in the form of written rules or routinized behaviours, materialize power relations on a specific societal issue. I adopt a broad definition of policy that covers (1) formal rules, laws, and regulations, (2) informal state approaches such as administrative practices, as well as (3) the absence of regulation and purposive laissez-faire (see Zolberg 1978: 243). Although I touch upon implementation dynamics throughout my case studies, I did not systematically investigate these, as this would have required a different methodological set-up.

Substantively, my thesis covers the two aspects of immigration policy conceptualized by Hammar (1985: 7-9): (1) immigration control policy, i.e. rules and practices governing the selection and admission of migrants, such as border control policies, visa requirements, or regularizations, as well as its corollary of expulsion and return policies; and (2) immigrant policy, i.e rules and practices governing the conditions for migrants' stay and integration, such as socio-economic rights related to education, health, or work. I also adopt a comprehensive approach in terms of migrant groups, including not only policies towards labour migrants, students and family migrants, but also towards irregular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

In addition, I look at relations with origin countries, as well as with international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissariat for Refugees (UNHCR). I only briefly touch upon questions of immigrants' political rights and access to citizenship, as these are not (yet) part of the political discussions in Morocco and Tunisia. Any future study of immigration and socio-political change, however, will inevitably have to investigate the long-term effect of settlement and naturalization in reshaping the Moroccan and Tunisian polity, and, in the case of democratic Tunisia, the electorate.

Together, these diverse facets of immigration policy form a country's *(im)migration regime*, whose origins and transformations stand at the centre of my empirical investigations in Part II and III. As Sciortino (2004: 32-33) writes, "a country's migration regime is usually not the outcome of consistent planning. It is rather a mix of implicit conceptual frames, generations of turf wars among bureaucracies and waves after waves of 'quick fix' to emergencies, triggered by changing political constellations of actors".[30] By mobilizing the (im)migration regime concept, I seek to highlight the historically contingent and inherently contradictory nature of state approaches to immigration.

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30   For a comprehensive discussion of the genealogy of the 'migration regime' concept and its analytical potential, see Chapters 2 and 3 of Pott et al. 2018: 19-80).

Policies as a lens to study states and political transformations

Although globalization scholars have suggested that nation-states and national borders have increasingly lost their importance (Bhagwati 2003; Hirst and Thompson 1995; Sassen 1996b; Soysal 1994), states remain the prime reference point for popular and diplomatic demands of migration control (Castles 2012; Leca 2012; Torpey 1997), and borders – tangible as walls and fences, or symbolic in the form of papers and stamps – continue to be major barriers in people's lives (Bonjour 2011; Garcés-Mascareñas 2012). Improving our understanding of the drivers and dynamics of immigration politics thus remains critical for the study of human mobility. Investigating immigration policies and politics is, however, not only relevant to better grasp dynamics structuring global migration. It is also a lens to study statehood, state (trans) formations and dynamics of political change more broadly.

For Hassenteufel (2008: 13), "the state constructs itself through the production of public policies." This is particularly valid when it comes to immigration: The migrant disturbs the 'normality' of the state and is challenging its most important features – its efforts to maintain sovereignty over people, to demarcate its national territory, and enforce its control over borders, as well as to define a common national identity. Consequently, the regulation of migration is a core activity of the state, it "contributes to constituting the very 'state-ness' of states" (Torpey 1997: 240). State attempts to control individual mobility through instruments like passports, visas, and identity cards are part and parcel of the state formation process and crucial for the consolidation of state power. As has been famously stated by Sayad (1999: 6-7): "Thinking about immigration basically means questioning the state, questioning its foundations, questioning its internal structuration and working mechanisms; […] Immigration – and this is probably why it disturbs – forces us to unveil the state, to unveil the way we conceive of the state and the way it conceives of itself."

Given that state formation is a continuously ongoing process (Tilly 1975), migration policy becomes a powerful lens to look at the permanent 'reinvention of the state'. In this vein, this thesis provides insights into how state (trans)formation processes – such as democratization, authoritarian consolidation, geopolitical shifts, changing notions of national identity, or broader dynamics within the social fabric – affect how immigrants are seen and dealt with.

3 TOWARDS MORE GENERAL IMMIGRATION POLICY THEORIES[31]

Having outlined the key concepts of this thesis, I now turn towards the body of research that forms the backbone and starting point of my empirical investigation and theoretical endeavour: immigration policy theories. As mentioned earlier, these theories are

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31   This section draws heavily upon the literature review published in Natter (2018b).

intrinsically biased towards 'Western liberal democracies' and suggest a 'regime effect' by tying expansive immigration policy outcomes and particular immigration policy-making dynamics, such as the role of courts, employer lobbies or the electorate, to the liberal democratic nature of Western states. This thesis interrogates the restricted scope of existing theories and aims to circumscribe more precisely the boundaries of a 'regime effect'. In doing so, I abandon dichotomous concepts such as 'Global North' and 'Global South', or 'Western liberal-democracy' and its less used pendant of 'Non-Western autocracy', as they not only disregard the diversity of immigration politics within each of these categories but also obscure the potential similarities across them. Breaking up this binary world (di)vision is key to advancing comparative research and theory-building on immigration politics, which is what this thesis seeks to contribute to.

3.1 IMMIGRATION POLICY THEORIES: THE STATE OF THE ART

Major advances in immigration policy theory over the past decades cluster around three topics: (1) Research on the determinants of immigration policy has pursued the central question of why states enact the policies they enact, seeking to identify the 'factors that make and unmake migration policies' (Castles 2004a: 852). (2) Research on the effectiveness of migration policies has asked 'why migration policies fail' (Castles 2004b: 205). To explain the gap between policy objectives and policy outcomes, scholars looked at institutional dynamics, issues of policy implementation (Eule 2014; Infantino 2010), or at the outsourcing of migration controls (Lahav 1998; Menz 2009). (3) Finally, research investigating the broader role of the state in international migration (for an excellent review, see Massey 1999) has looked at 'non-migration policies' (such as labour market or social welfare policies), (de)colonization, or conflict (Mahendra 2015; Teitelbaum 1984; Vezzoli 2015). This thesis engages with the first research topic – the determinants of immigration policy.

Structuring divisions in the field

Systematic theorizing of immigration policymaking has emerged during the 1990s, when social scientists sought to explain the puzzling observation that European and North American states consistently enacted liberal immigration policies despite popular demands for restriction. Hollifield (1992a) suggested that liberal democracies are confronted with contradictory drivers when elaborating immigration policies: "Since the end of World War II, international economic forces (trade, investment, and migration) have been pushing states towards greater openness, while the international state system and powerful (domestic) political forces push states towards greater closure. […] Hence the liberal paradox: the economic logic of liberalism is one of openness, but the political and legal logic is one of closure" (Hollifield 2004: 886-7). Other researchers such as Freeman (1995) or Joppke (1998b; 2001) have explained expansive immigration policy outcomes by pointing at particular policy dynamics, such

as the role of courts, employer lobbies or the electorate. What these authors have in common is that they tied explanations of immigration policymaking to the liberal-democratic nature of political systems, thereby suggesting a 'regime effect'.

Over the years, scholars have identified four primary immigration policy drivers: (1) the role of socioeconomic interests at the domestic level, operating via interest groups and public opinion; (2) the importance of foreign policy and diplomatic interests; (3) the role of state institutions' potentially conflicting interests; and (4) the impact of international norms and ideas on national policymaking (for reviews of immigration policy theories, see: Bonjour 2011; Boswell 2007b; Castles 2004a; Hollifield 1992b; Massey 1999; Meyers 2000). Whether these factors are complementary or competing, and what the respective weight is in explaining policy processes, remains debated.

To map the terms of this debate, I categorize immigration policy theories along two dimensions: the *factors of analysis* they consider, namely the emphasis on the role of ideas, interests, or institutions in immigration policymaking; and the *level of analysis* they adopt, namely the localization of the primary immigration policy source within society, the state, or the international arena. Table 3 provides an overview of immigration policy theories and their primary foci, showcasing the main dividing lines. These divisions reflect broader theoretical debates in political sociology and public policy research on state-society relations or internal-external dynamics (for succinct overviews, see: Grindle and Thomas 1991: 20-32; Putnam 1988: 430-431).

TABLE 3: Categorizing immigration policymaking theories

		Factors of analysis			Levels of analysis		
		Interests	Ideas	Institutions	Society	State	International
Theories	Political economy approaches (Marxism, pluralism, domestic politics)	✓			✓		
	International relations approaches (world systems theory)	✓					✓
	Institutionalism (bureaucratic politics, state interest approaches)	✓		✓		✓	
	Historical approaches (National identity approach)		✓	✓		✓	
	Globalization theory approaches		✓	✓			✓

SOURCE: Adapted from Natter (2018b)

Reviewing dominant approaches

First of all, classical political economy approaches adopt a rational choice perspective to analyse different actors' interests, and to determine which problems are set on the agenda and how decisions are taken. This approach locates the origin of immigration policy within society and tends to reduce the state to a neutral arena captured by economic and societal interests. Within this tradition, class analytical approaches such as Marxism see the state as an instrument of domination that reflects the interests of the capitalist class. Liberal policies towards low-skilled workers and irregular migrants, for instance, are explained through employer interests, given that a large basis of dependent and vulnerable workers increases their power (Castles and Kosack 1985).

Pluralist or 'domestic politics' approaches suggest that societal cleavages do not run along class lines, but along distinctions between political parties, interest groups, or client networks. In this view, conflict and bargaining between societal groups with various interests, as well as differential access to resources, structure public policymaking (see for instance: Olson 1965). Within migration studies, Freeman (1995; 2006) most prominently theorized that client politics characterize immigration policymaking in liberal democracies. He argued that the costs of immigration are diffused among the entire population, while its benefits are concentrated in the hands of specific groups such as major employer and ethnic advocacy groups, which makes it easier for them to organize and lobby for their interests. Domestic politics approaches have been particularly useful to analyse the role of electoral politics (Alonso and da Fonseca 2011; Givens and Luedtke 2005) or lobbying by employers (Ellermann 2013; Peters 2017) and labour unions (Marino, Roosblad and Penninx 2017) in immigration policymaking.

International relations theories lift these approaches to the supra-national realm: Within the Marxist tradition, world systems approaches (Wallerstein 1974) and dependency theories posit that immigration policies reflect the global market structure (Portes and Walton 1981). Within the realist tradition, hegemonic stability approaches postulate that immigration policies reflect the interests of geopolitically dominant states. These theories have helped understanding refugee policies (Carruthers 2005; Teitelbaum 1984), the use of migration as a foreign policy tool by origin or destination countries (Adamson and Tsourapas 2018; Mitchell 1989), or dynamics of migration externalization (Boswell 2003; Reslow and Vink 2015).

Second, in contrast to society-centred political economy analyses, state-centred explanations of immigration policy are closely tied to a political sociology of the state (Sciortino 2000). Institutionalism grants the state (partial) freedom from societal demands and puts the fragmentation of state interests, as well as dynamics within the state apparatus, centre stage. Bureaucratic politics approaches highlight how actors strategically use resources such as control over information or access to key policy-

makers to advance their institutional interests, thereby creating turf wars – disputes between institutions over spheres of influence (Allison and Halperin 1972). Within migration studies, Joppke (1998b) showed how different administrative visions of immigration clash, notably between legal actors seeking to enshrine migrants' rights and other state institutions such as Ministries of Interior who try to curtail them. Similarly, Guiraudon (2003) highlighted how the power competitions and bureaucratic rivalries at the European level shaped supra-national immigration policymaking.

The state interest approach goes one step further. It not only grants the state partial freedom from societal interests, but argues that states themselves pursue interests, such as regime legitimation and stability, national development goals, or the maintenance of social peace (see for instance: Krasner 1978; Stepan 1981; Trimberger 1978). Within migration studies, Boswell (2007b: 77) most prominently argued that "societal interests and institutional constraints are incorporated in migration policy only when conforming to the functional imperatives of the state", above all to secure its legitimacy and stability.

A third set of theories emphasizes the historical context of immigration policymaking and focuses on how ideas and institutions structurally constrain policymakers. The national identity approach has been widely used to show how immigration policies tie into a country's particular national history, identity, or political institutions. Brubaker (1992) traced French and German immigration policies back to these countries' distinct histories of nationhood, and Freeman (1995) identified three distinct modes of immigration politics in 'Western liberal democracies' depending on the countries' immigration history and the institutionalization of migration actors. Most forcefully, Zolberg (1978) analysed how, in Western Europe and North America, changing national migration policies reflected the emergence of modern states and of global capitalism between the 16th and the 20th centuries. More recently, Zolberg (2006) again showed the relevance of such an approach by recounting how immigration policy shaped US nation building.

Research inspired by globalization theories shifts these dynamics onto the international level and focuses on how global norms and institutions shape national immigration policymaking. Most prominently, Sassen (1996a) argued that the rise of an international human rights regime constrains the leverage of national administrations in curtailing migrants' rights (see also Guiraudon and Lahav (2000); Soysal (1994)). Similarly, Hollifield (1992b) argued that the ideology of liberalism protects individual rights and fosters economic globalization, which in turn limits nation-states in their immigration policymaking autonomy.

As none of these theories can claim to provide a freestanding account of immigration policy, most empirical analyses combine different approaches. For instance, Timmer and Williams (1998) draw on Marxist and globalization theories to analyse the economic factors and international policy diffusion mechanisms that led to

immigration restrictions in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, and the US before the 1930s; and Calavita (1992) joins a bureaucratic politics analysis with a pluralist approach in her study of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service. In line with the more recent trend in public policy analysis introduced in Section 2.2, Boswell (2007b: 75-76) therefore argues for a more focused analysis of configurations of interests, ideas, and institutions in immigration policy research.

These immigration policymaking theories informed my empirical investigation of immigration politics in Morocco and Tunisia. In particular, they allowed me to derive expectations on the role of and interactions between different actors involved in immigration policymaking, as well as of the interests and ideas guiding their actions. In Chapter 11, I will come back to these different sets of theories and take them as a starting point for more general theory-building on immigration policymaking.

3.2 IMMIGRATION POLICY BEYOND 'WESTERN LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES'

The theories just reviewed have almost exclusively emerged from research on destination countries in Europe, North America, and Oceania, i.e. the so-called 'Western liberal democracies'. This dominant normative bias has impeded a more general theorization of immigration policymaking, leaving most countries in the world – including some with the highest levels of immigration or emigration, such as the Gulf countries, Malaysia, Indonesia, or Côte d'Ivoire – outside of theoretical debates.

Why this Western bias?

Next to the general Eurocentric bias in social sciences (see Section 1), three widespread assumptions can explain the scarcity of theoretical research on immigration politics outside 'Western liberal democracies': First, there is a tendency in migration studies and broader public debates on migration to split the world into migrant destinations situated in the 'Global North', and migrant origins situated in the 'Global South'. This ignores the fact that nearly 50% of international migrants – trend rising – live in countries categorized as 'southern' (UNPD 2013: 1).

Second, this categorization along development levels or political geographies frequently overlaps with assumptions about political regimes: Countries in the 'Global North' are generally assumed to be liberal democracies, while countries in the 'Global South' are often cast as autocracies or, at best, malfunctioning democracies. However, each part of the world has seen the rise and fall of monarchies, liberal democracies, single-party dictatorships, or military regimes. While the image of Europe as the cradle and champion of liberal democracy is widespread, in fact, many European countries only democratized a few decades ago – such as Greece, Spain, or former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, not to mention fascist regimes in Italy, Germany, or Austria in the 1930s and 1940s. At the same time, the existence of consolidated democracies in Latin America, Asia, or Africa – such

as Uruguay, Chile, India, Malaysia, Botswana, or South Africa – defies the prevailing perception of the 'Global South' as dominated by autocratic rule.

Third, there has been a tendency in the social sciences to overlook the complexity of dynamics within 'southern' states. On the one hand, such states are portrayed as inefficient and powerless, and their public policies considered largely irrelevant because widespread corruption and lacking administrative capacity limits implementation. On the other hand, these states are painted as omnipotent and centralized, leaving no space for negotiation within and among state and civil society actors. Albeit for different reasons, both portrayals do not consider institutional dynamics central to understanding immigration policymaking.[32] Writing on the Arab world, Moisseron (2009: 22) thus highlights that "the mythos of state unicity is still deeply anchored. […] Studies that show how Arab states are also subject to internal struggles between pressure groups are still too rare."

As a result, the little theorization there is on migration politics outside the 'Western liberal-democratic' sphere focuses mainly on emigration and diaspora policies (Adamson 2018; de Haas and Vezzoli 2011; FitzGerald 2006; Gamlen 2008; Glasius 2018a; Liu and Van Dongen 2016; Miller and Peters 2014; Naujoks 2013; Souiah 2014), or on policymaking in the context of 'externalization' (Adepoju, van Noorloos and Zoomers 2010; Fine 2015; Kimball 2007; Lavenex and Uçarer 2002; Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart 2010). Although these studies are a welcome corrective to the dominant Western-centrism in migration research, many either reproduce these countries' framing as emigration countries or grant little attention to domestic dynamics. Structural explanations of domestic immigration politics that show how diverging interests – within and among state, civil society, and international actors – are negotiated have been largely missing.[33]

A nascent field

To some extent, this Western bias and the related assumptions of mainstream theories about the link between political regimes and immigration policy have been challenged since the mid-2000s by novel empirical research. In the context of the Americas, case studies have looked at domestic policymaking dynamics in Argentina (Sánchez-Alonso 2010) and Mexico (González-Murphy and Koslowski 2011). The historical, cross-country comparison by FitzGerald and Cook-Martín (2014) challenged Western-centric preconceptions about the link between liberal immigration policy and democracy by showing that North American democracies were the first to

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32   This is mirrored in disciplinary divides: 'Southern' states and their public policies have not been analysed through public policy or political sociology theories but relegated to disciplines such as anthropology, development, or area studies that have focused on the 'cultural' determinants of state actions or over-stated local peculiarities.

33   Some notable exceptions exist but the empirical insights of these studies have largely remained disconnected from ongoing theoretical debates in migration studies. See for instance Russells' (1989) analysis of domestic actors' competition over immigration policy formulation in Kuwait, or Pillay's (1999) research on changing labour immigration policy in Malaysia since the 1970s.

establish ethnic immigration selection criteria and the last to abolish them, long after most Latin America autocracies did so. And Acosta Arcarazo and Freier (2015) questioned Hollifield's liberal paradox hypothesis by analysing the 'populist liberalism' in Brazil and Argentina, where political discourses on immigration have overall been more liberal than implemented policies.

Working on the Gulf countries, Thiollet (2010; 2015) analysed the historical links between immigration and nationhood in Saudi Arabia, as well as the ways in which Gulf monarchies have instrumentalized immigration to counter the potential for social revolutions. Research on Africa highlights similar links between migration and state formation: Klotz (2012; 2015) showed how the current immigration policy regime in South Africa is rooted in a century of state formation and societal discussions over national identity. Milner (2006) analysed the domestic and international determinants of refugee policy in Kenya, Tanzania, and Guinea up to the early 2000s. And Vigneswaran and Quirk (2015) exemplify the various ways in which African states' strategies to shape human movement – by promoting and/or preventing it – reflect broader economic, domestic, and international political priorities of the regime. Also in China and India, contemporary approaches towards immigration seem importantly shaped by countries' history of state formation, in particular the role of emigration (Haugen 2015; Naujoks 2018; Van Dongen 2018).

Emphasizing imbrications between immigration and foreign policy, research on the 'migration diplomacy' of oil-rich Arab countries (Thiollet 2011; 2016) showed that migration policies are key instruments of Arab regional integration within the framework of 'illiberal transnationalism'. Similarly, studies on Libya (Paoletti 2011; Tsourapas 2017) highlight that the apparent contradictions in immigration policy are, in fact, a foreign policy strategy. In this vein, other research suggests that Morocco, Turkey, and Egypt have consciously pursued a policy of 'ambivalence' towards migrants, preferring to grant migrants rights through ad hoc policy decisions rather than through legal changes, ensuring their ability to backtrack on these rights in the future (Norman 2016a; 2016b).

Complementing these insights on political drivers are studies that highlight the primacy of economic factors in immigration policy. Particularly in the context of Asian countries such as China and Singapore (Van Dongen 2018; Yeoh and Lin 2012), immigration policy changes often go hand in hand with broader economic policy shifts. Also in Malaysia, Garcés-Mascareñas (2012) has shown how growing (irregular) labour immigration was in line with the country's economic development policy and the lobbying goals of large employers (see also Sadiq 2005). Lastly, scholars started to investigate the role of societal actors in immigration policy – such as labour unions and business owners in Malaysia (Castles 2004a; Pillai 1999) or civil society in Singapore (Kemp and Kfir 2016; Yeoh and Lin 2012), Iran (Christensen 2016; Moghadam 2018), as well as Morocco and Turkey (Üstübici 2015b) – to discuss to what

extent the strategies and bottom-up mobilization on immigration might differ across political regimes.

Next to this growing field of qualitative comparative research, some quantitative analyses have investigated the role of political regimes in immigration and emigration policy (Breunig, Cao and Luedtke 2012; Miller and Peters 2014; Mirilovic 2010; Shin 2017). In particular, Ruhs (2013) has argued that there is a trade-off between the numbers and rights of low-skilled workers, i.e. the choice of allowing high immigration and restricting integration rights or limiting immigration and offering integration rights. However interesting, these quantitative insights are of limited relevance to my research on the politics of immigration policy as they tend to treat states as single, homogeneous entities, without paying attention to the fragmentation of state interests or their partial dependence of international or societal actors.

More generally, while empirical work is flourishing, the comparison and consolidation of theoretical insights is still lacking, and most migration research – including the more recent work reviewed here – still overwhelmingly separates theorizing on 'democratic' or 'Western' policymaking from theorizing on 'non-democratic' or 'non-Western' policymaking. As this thesis shows, looking for ideal-typical democratic or autocratic, Western or non-Western immigration policy processes is a fundamentally flawed exercise, as it disregards not only the variety of policy processes within each of these categories,[34] but also similarities across them.

4   CONCLUSION: LEAVING BINARY WORLD (DI)VISIONS BEHIND

This thesis aims to bring together the wealth of emerging empirical insights and to move the discussion beyond the dichotomies that continue to structure research in this field. To improve our understanding of actual immigration policymaking, we need to approach political systems as a spectrum and focus on dynamics of political change within and across regime types. By exploring Moroccan and Tunisian immigration politics in-depth, my research (1) highlights similarities in immigration policymaking drivers and dynamics across the 'Western/non-Western' and 'democratic/autocratic' divides, (2) and feeds theoretical insights from Morocco and Tunisia back into research on European migration policy, to better understand – for instance – autocratic policy processes and practices. Ultimately, this allows me to develop suggestions for more general immigration policy theories.

To sum up, I neither wish to merely 'transfer' Western theories to other spheres, nor to come up with new, 'non-Western' (North African, Arab, or African) theories of

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34   Indeed, compared to the prototypical 'Western liberal-democratic' state, actual political systems in Europe and North America display large variations with regards to electoral rules, party systems, and distribution of power among and within legislative, executive, and judiciary bodies, not to mention the difference between parliamentary and presidential systems or the existence of constitutional monarchies.

immigration policymaking. I am searching for the middle ground, for theory-building across pre-determined world divisions (for a similar rationale, see: Bakewell and Jónsson 2013). Ultimately, the thesis argues that theories that emerged out of Western case studies are relevant to understanding immigration politics across political regimes and political geographies – at least to some extent. This extent, however, has to be clearly demarcated. Based on insights gained from the contrasting cases of Morocco and Tunisia, the thesis specifies policy processes that cut across regime types and those where political regimes matter. Hereby, the thesis advances theory-building on immigration policymaking and contributes to broader reflections within the social sciences on how to overcome Eurocentrism through 'reciprocal comparisons' (Austin 2007; Pomeranz 2000).