

This PDF is auto-generated for reference only. As such, it may contain some conversion errors and/or missing information. For all formal use please refer to the official version on the website, as linked below.

## EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies

<https://www.e-ir.info/2017/06/24/eu-morocco-negotiations-on-migrations-and-the-decentring-agenda-in-eu-studies/>

NORA EL QADIM, JUN 24 2017

**This is an excerpt from *Critical Epistemologies of Global Politics*. Get your free copy on E-International Relations.**

Recent media attention devoted to the so-called 'migrant' or 'refugee crisis' — in other words the revelation of difficulties in the functioning of European asylum systems — once again exposed Eurocentric perceptions of migrations and human mobility. Although some academic analyses of the recent 'crisis' (as well as previous ones) have unpacked and countered such perceptions (see, e.g., Pallister-Wilkins 2015; Zaragoza Cristiani 2016; Bilgin 2016), this form of Eurocentrism continues to be reflected in a large part of the research on European migration policy. This chapter builds on the existing critique of International Relations (IR) and security studies as being Western- or Eurocentric, contributing to a decentring research agenda on European Union (EU) migration policy and on the EU's external policy more generally by looking at EU-Morocco negotiations on migration. The purpose is to identify specific ways through which this agenda can be implemented. This chapter also tries to further this agenda by examining how the ideas and suggestions this agenda proposes can converge with research on migration policies and border control, which are precisely concerned with the varying definitions of borders and unequal, asymmetric mobilities. First, I will examine how the decentring agenda intersects with the study of EU migration policies, including its implications for developing research strategies. Second, I will show how these strategies can be helpful in examining EU negotiations with a neighbouring country, in this case Morocco, and how the study of migration policies offers a particularly useful case for decentring the study of the EU's external policy.

### **Decentring the EU's External Migration Policy: EU Studies Meets Postcolonial Approaches**

Since the 1990s, EU studies has been subjected to numerous criticisms that aim to deconstruct the mythologies of European integration, a linear progress towards federalism, or an 'ever-closer union.' Several authors have recently underlined the Eurocentrism of EU studies, especially in analysing the EU's external action, calling for a decentring of EU studies, along with a decentring of the study of the foreign policies of Western countries and IR more generally. These criticisms unpack the different components of the Eurocentrism of EU studies, such as 'civilizational' mythologies and ideologies (Bilgin 2004; Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis 2013), various dynamics of othering (Diez 2004; 2005), and the role of Europe's self-image (Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002; Cebeci 2012; Patel 2013). They converge with the emergence of greater reflections on Western- and Eurocentric biases within IR and international studies (Hobson 2012). Indeed, some IR scholars aim to decentre the discipline (Acharya 1995; Doty 1996; Tickner 2003; Acharya and Buzan 2010; Bilgin 2010). They have pursued Chakrabarty's injunction to 'provincialise Europe' (2000), and some have thus advocated a postcolonial or non-Western approach to IR (Tickner and Waever 2007; Tickner and Blaney 2012; Tickner 2013) and security studies (Barkawi and Laffey 2006; Bilgin 2010). In a sense, this is comparable to decolonial thinking and Mignolo's (2000) call for border thinking as a way of critically reflecting on knowledge production from the outside.

### **From Eurocentric Bias to Questioning Asymmetry in EU Migration Policies**

Migration is a central policy for tackling Eurocentrism in EU studies. Migration policies are typically marred by the

# EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies

Written by Nora El Qadim

singular histories different European Member States have with their former empires. Moreover, as argued by Catarina Kinnvall, migration, European integration, and the colonial discourse are tightly intertwined. She writes that, 'Europe and European integration must be read within the context of colonial and postcolonial globalization, migration and ethnicity. Hence the discourse of European unity and integration cannot be automatically discharged from the core elements of a colonial discourse' (Kinnvall 2016: 155). Interestingly, migration policy has also been central to the construction of external competences for EU institutions, particularly in the field of Home Affairs; the Directorate General in charge of Home Affairs, officially created in 1999 on the basis of a pre-existing small task force,<sup>[1]</sup> has used the idea of an 'external dimension' of migration policies and home affairs to gain competences (at the expense of the directorates in charge of development or of external relations), as well as funding and personnel over the years. Within the EU narrative, migration policy is central to the construction of 'external borders,' exemplifying the historicity and specificity of the borders/migration nexus which is, as Walters (2015) underlines, far from being universal.

It is not surprising then that the literature on European external migration policy is particularly representative of Eurocentric tendencies within EU studies. It has long tended to focus on European actors, be they from EU institutions or from Member States. For example, the notion of 'external governance' has been central in explaining migration policies. It has helped show how the EU has tried to export its endogenous security model to neighbouring countries in order to enlarge the scope of its influence without opening its 'institutional borders.' The notion of external governance questions the idea of European external policy as the sum of the national foreign policies of Member States (Lavenex 2004). Part of the literature in this field focuses on readmission agreements, which organise the administrative process of deportation by obtaining and regulating the collaboration of origin countries to make it easier to deport undocumented migrants to a third country. Readmission agreements are seen as one of the main tools of the EU's external action in migration matters. When it comes to analysing negotiations on readmission, a common hypothesis is that the EU's negotiating ability is limited by how competencies are delegated. However, although analyses through this lens underline the role of internal compromise in defining European external policy, they tend to overlook resistances to EU external policy *outside* the EU. Such resistance is mainly described as the end result of internal European conflict between Member States and the EU Commission for negotiations with third countries (Lavenex 2006; Coleman 2009). State actors of these countries are only taken into account indirectly, as recipients of the uncertainties of negotiated intra-European decision-making, be it in the field of democratization (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004) or migration policies (Wunderlich 2010; 2012).

This bias is the consequence of most studies concentrating on official texts produced by European institutions, which typically produce more documentation than institutions from third countries. Interviews are another important source for research. However, the extent in which these interviews are representative of official discourse is rarely clarified. Despite the insistence of the first studies of external governance on sociological reflection (Lavenex and Uçarer 2002), it is often difficult to distinguish between the analysis and the discourses of EU actors (Lavenex and Wichmann 2009). Moreover, the asymmetry in the accessible sources and actors is rarely questioned by those who research EU relations with neighbouring countries.

This relates to one of the main limits when viewing EU external policies through the lens of external governance; the asymmetry of EU relations with surrounding countries is not taken into account as such, although these 'neighbours' are mostly less powerful both militarily and economically. Asymmetry is only slightly more prominent in more recent work, inspired by the notion of 'complex interdependence' developed in International Relations (Keohane and Nye 1977) and applied to the analysis of migrations through the idea of 'global governance' (Betts 2009; 2011) or 'multi-layered governance' of migration (Kunz, Lavenex, and Panizzon 2011). Even those that mention asymmetry rarely unpack its meaning, especially the impact of the EU's domination on surrounding countries. From the domination of economically dependent countries, some former colonies of various Member States, to the complex relationship with Russia, the modalities of the relations with the EU's 'neighbours' are not always the same. Yet domination is most of the time usually implicitly assumed rather than examined.

Asymmetry is also more prominent in studies that underline the externalisation of migration controls and its effects in third countries. Huysmans (2000) has demonstrated how externalisation and securitization go hand in hand. The representation of migrants as potential threats has led to the strengthening of border controls in order to prevent the arrival of undocumented migrants and to the organization of deportations for those who do manage to enter

# **EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies**

Written by Nora El Qadim

European countries. The term externalisation highlights the domination of European countries and the EU over surrounding countries, which have been pressured into adopting similar securitised norms of migration control (Guiraudon and Lahav 2000; Boswell 2003; Geddes 2005; Guild, Carrera, and Balzacq 2008; Bigo and Guild 2010). Readmission agreements, dealing with deportation procedures, have thus also been frequently described as a case of externalisation (Gabrielli 2008; Coleman 2009). Morocco is an example of this (Elmadmad 2004; Belguendouz 2005). While the analysis of externalisation takes asymmetry seriously, such interpretations also leave little room for the perspective of actors from countries surrounding the EU. They are implicitly understood as submitting to, and carrying out, European demands. In that sense, this literature also remains rather Eurocentric, and cannot fully explain the evolution of EU policies. By overlooking the agency of actors in dominated countries, it neglects their possible influence on negotiations and ultimately on EU policies.

## **Possible Strategies for Decentring the Study of EU Migration Policies**

Migration policies lend themselves well to questioning the asymmetry of IR, which can be a starting point for decentring the study of the EU's external policies. Several authors have questioned the asymmetry of international relations, and highlighted the agency of so-called 'origin countries.' Some have underlined that the governments of emigration states can have their own objectives (e.g., economic), negotiating with destination countries without necessarily taking the lives of migrants into account (Sayad 2004). In the case of Morocco, several studies have shown how the Moroccan State tried to organise the emigration of some of its citizens (Brand 2006; Iskander 2010). Moreover, other studies have showed how emigration countries could pressure destination countries by using migration as a threat in foreign policy negotiations (Teitelbaum 1984). Kelly Greenhill (2000), for instance, analyses the diplomatic use of migration in the world and talks about 'weapons of mass migration.' The case of South-North migrations in the Mediterranean has also been analysed from this perspective. Several case studies have considered the positions of third countries, showing how they can sometimes use negotiations to their advantage (Cassarino 2007; El Qadim 2010; İçduygulu and Aksel 2014; Wolff 2014). Jean-Pierre Cassarino (2010), for instance, describes a relative 'empowerment' of origin countries when confronted with the EU on the issue of readmission and its manipulation, while Emanuela Paoletti (2010) talks of a 'migration of power.' These studies all underline that asymmetrical relations are not fixed, and that sectoral negotiations can question the domination of one party by the other. However, these studies mostly concentrate on high-level negotiations and official discourses. They also present a conception of sending states as unitary and homogeneous, mostly focusing on the 'interest' of origin countries without unpacking this concept or opening up the black box of the state.

The decentring of the study of migration policies could be furthered. In this respect, the postcolonial critique of IR, security studies, or EU studies all underline the need for useful research strategies in developing a different, renewed, and less Euro- or Western-centric research agenda. Meera Sabaratnam (2011) has, for example, identified six possible 'decolonising strategies for the study of world politics.' They range from historical and historiographic analysis, often favoured in postcolonial studies, to questioning the presumed psychology of IR subjects, which usually tends towards a rationalist subjectivity, implicitly understanding states as reified identities. Similarly, studies of EU external policy also point to the steps necessary for pursuing a decentring agenda. In order to 'provincialise' Europe (Chakrabarty 2000), we are told we must truly engage with others (Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis 2013). Moreover, they underline the entanglement of this research agenda with normative and ethical concerns (Bilgin 2010; Rutazibwa 2010). These calls have laid out an agenda for research that would 'envisag[e] other countries and regions as centres of their own geostrategic and geopolitical concerns, while recognizing that legacies of a more Eurocentric era may inflect, for better or for worse, upon actors' perceptions and preferences to this day' (Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis 2013: 296). Nevertheless, this agenda remains, for the time being, largely programmatic. Case studies that explore EU policies in neighbouring countries, including through fieldwork with non-EU actors, rarely dwell upon the meaning of doing so. This is either because the main question they ask concerns the implementation of EU policies (as is the case in the literature on external governance, for example) or because they are mainly interested in deconstructing the labels used by the EU in these external policies.

Here I want to review and explore the strategies that proved useful in my own research on decentring the study of EU-Morocco negotiations on migrations. While it is clear that migrants and their role in shaping these policies should also be taken into account (Mezzadra 2004), my main concern here is with the dynamics of state-to-state relations when

# EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies

Written by Nora El Qadim

these relations are asymmetric. First, I use a strategy closely related to what Sabaratnam (2011: 789) calls 'pluralising the various potential subjects of social inquiry and analysing world politics from alternative subaltern perspectives.' This is also what Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis (2013) call for when they speak of engagement with others. While this is a corollary to another strategy Sabaratnam (2011: 787) identifies, which consists in 'deconstruct[ing] ... the West as the primary subject of world history,' it involves concentrating on different actors, namely non-Western ones. In practice, this involves pluralising sources, be they written, oral, or of other types, as well as a strong commitment to interpreting and understanding a variety of ways of thinking. It also involves an effort to understand other viewpoints as well as values and subjectivities — and, in some cases, also language skills. This allows for a deeper questioning on the functioning of asymmetric relations, since engagement with these 'others' gives the possibility of envisaging agency and dynamics of resistance that would otherwise not necessarily be visible. Ethnographic approaches and the study of practices can be particularly useful in this endeavour (Côté-Boucher, Infantino, and Salter 2013).

Second, as Sabaratnam (2011: 793) notes, decolonising IR requires trying to displace 'the rationalist, masculinist subjectivity/psyche attributed implicitly to states' relations with each other ... with one that is more complex, situated, affective and particular.' This anthropomorphic idea of the interests of states is also very prominent in the study of migration policies and negotiations. These interests are often defined relative to political and economic stakes, which usually underlie explanations of migration and border policies in the North. However, concentrating on the discourses and practices of state actors in the South reveals different considerations, where more complex, affective, and moral considerations are put forward. While this does not mean that such considerations are not part of political decisions on migrations in so-called 'destination countries' (Fassin 2005), they are more readily put forward as parts of the legitimate rationale of migration policies in so-called 'origin countries.' In the same way border thinking encourages us to accept a broader understanding of what knowledge means (Mignolo 2000), decentring the analysis of migration and border policies forces us to envisage different, contending rationales for apprehending human mobility.

## What we Can Learn from Decentring the Study of the EU's External Policy: the Case of EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations

EU-Morocco negotiations on migration are particularly interesting in terms of decentring the study of EU external policy. Although a specific agreement has yet to be reached, negotiations have been ongoing since 1999, the year that the European Commission obtained the mandate from EU Member States to deal with the external dimension of migrations. Such a protracted process is puzzling if the analysis centres largely on the EU and its Member States. In fact, it can only be understood by looking closely at Moroccan actors in the negotiations.

These negotiations have overwhelmingly centred on the theme of readmission, a persistent issue in EU-Morocco relations since 2003. Readmission agreements, as described above, focus particularly on organising and promoting a speedy delivery of consular *laissez-passers* by the authorities of origin countries for undocumented individuals who do not present any identification proving their citizenship. Another important objective of EU negotiations on readmission has been collaboration on the deportation of so-called 'transit migrants' — i.e., undocumented individuals who are not citizens of the signatory state but have 'transited' through its territory before reaching an EU country. The collaboration of origin countries in this field is often difficult to obtain, mostly because it does not benefit them in any way (Ellermann 2008). These negotiations appear to be a good case for the study of two important dimensions that have been overlooked in the study of international relations on migrations: (1) the agency of 'third countries' in the South, which is often underestimated; and, (2) the importance of symbolic dimension in international relations, which are often minimised in accounts highlighting a rationalist logic of international actors.

## Locating Agency in Asymmetric International Relations

Despite more than ten years of negotiations on an EU-wide readmission agreement, the Moroccan state has so far managed to avoid signing such an agreement. These negotiations originally began because Member States found it difficult, in the 1990s, to ensure collaboration from Morocco on deportation. Even where bilateral, more or less official readmission agreements existed, origin countries did not — and still do not — always implement them (Cassarino 2007; El Qadim 2014). After initial discussions within the Council, especially the High-Level Working

# EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies

Written by Nora El Qadim

Group on Migration and Asylum, the competence to negotiate readmission agreements was given to the Commission in 2000. The idea was that the EU could exercise more leverage in negotiations than individual Member States (Coleman 2009; Cassarino 2010). Negotiations with Morocco specifically started in April 2003. Despite numerous negotiation rounds, the European Commission has found it difficult to convince Moroccan negotiators to agree to the terms of the agreement, especially on the deportation of 'third country nationals.' Moroccan actors have thus used these negotiations to their benefit. This argument brings to light two important lessons. First, it reminds us of the existence of an autonomous agenda in 'origin' or 'transit countries.' Second, it highlights the existence of avoidance practices and resistance by governmental actors of countries usually considered as mere executors of policies formulated in 'destination countries.'

As an initial point, when researching EU external policy, it is easy to forget that neighbouring countries have their own agenda, both in the international arena and on national matters. It is important to unpack the 'interests' of 'origin' or 'transit countries' to distinguish between the aggregated interest of a country, domestic costs for the government, and administrative capacities and rivalries (Reslow 2012). Moroccan officials can be concerned with various matters of domestic policy, ranging from managing emigration, unemployment, and unrest (Brand 2006; Iskander 2010) to fighting terrorism or dealing with immigration to Morocco (Natter 2013). As important as it might be to understand the 'two-level game' (Putnam 1980) of the foreign policy of so-called 'origin countries,' it is also essential to comprehend this foreign policy as not only oriented towards the EU, as it sometimes seems to be understood in analyses of its external policy. For example, one can highlight the importance of Moroccan policy in Africa and the ties of the Kingdom with West African countries (Messari and Willis 2003). These ties matter in discussing migration control with European countries, and partly explain why Moroccan officials refuse to portray their country as 'Europe's policeman' (Belguendouz 2003) or to institute visa requirements for the entry of West Africans. It is also necessary to underline the fact that Moroccan officials are not only involved in discussions on migration with European countries. They also tackle these issues in international forums such as the framework put in place by the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Finally, EU Member States sometimes overshadow the EU in Moroccan foreign policy. Indeed, Member States also have their own foreign policies, and if they cannot obtain cooperation on deportation through the EU, they seek to obtain it directly, through bilateral relations.

This leads to my second point, which deals more directly with the agency of 'origin' and 'transit countries.' Indeed, the co-existence of EU-wide international relations and bilateral relations, by providing multiple arenas to third countries, can provide more opportunities for avoidance or resistance. It also gives rise to the possibility of seeking support from one partner in negotiations with another. This might explain why we can observe what Cassarino (2011) dubbed 'resilient bilateralism' where EU Member States continue to pursue negotiations on issues linked to readmission despite the exclusive mandate given to the EU Commission. Instead of negotiating a 'readmission agreement,' they negotiate, for example, on police cooperation, which in its implementation entails cooperation on deportation. Elsewhere, I have also shown how bilateral bargaining happens in the implementation of pre-existing agreements or with the sending of specialised liaison officers (El Qadim 2014). A widely publicised recent case of bilateralism in this field was that of collective deportations organised in early 2016 between Germany and Morocco after discussions at the highest level between Angela Merkel and King Mohammed VI (Le 360 2016).

In practice, this resilient bilateralism means that Moroccan diplomats and civil servants are engaged in discussions with European Member States as well as EU officials. These discussions at various levels and in various arenas provide multiple opportunities for resistance. In the case of EU-Morocco negotiations, interviewing an equal number of EU, Member State, and Moroccan actors shows how Moroccan negotiators have used the multiplicity of their interlocutors to continue avoiding the signature of a very visible EU-wide readmission agreement. This is accomplished primarily by obtaining the support of specific Member States in EU arenas, or by making an EU-wide agreement unnecessary for them through the pursuit of a more intensive, less visible cooperation on deportation in bilateral relations. Interviews also reveal how negotiation and bargaining happen at every level of international relations. In the case of deportation policies, mid-level bureaucrats in charge of organising cooperation between police services are central to understanding the ways in which agreements on the circulation (including deportation) of persons are implemented. These bureaucrats use such opportunities to challenge the ways in which 'destination' countries (in this case, France) envisage cooperation by challenging the statistics they used to evaluate this cooperation (El Qadim 2014). Looking below the usual level of negotiations between states reveals the dynamics of

# EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies

Written by Nora El Qadim

resistance and brokering that are otherwise not visible. Examining these dynamics allows us to nuance the image of unilateral domination and point to the agency of state actors from third countries. It highlights in particular their leeway and the interstices in international relations of domination.

## Symbols in the Decentring Agenda

Arguments based on symbols, emotions, or different moral stands have often been rejected as futile or meaningless. As Doty (1996: 8) argues, the *a priori* givenness of certain categories of analysis 'both presumes the relevance of particular categories (and the irrelevance of others) and at the same time mystifies the discursive construction of the categories themselves.' This has also been the case, to a certain extent, for discourses of governmental and administrative actors from 'origin countries' on migration policies and negotiations, which have not extensively been analysed, and are often dismissed as purely tactical. However, careful attention to discourses and arguments in 'origin' or 'transit countries' provides a story that also needs to be reported. In the case of EU-Morocco negotiations, it is important to understand that the promotion by Moroccan officials of an alternative to a purely security-oriented framework in migration policies was motivated by more than just economic and political interests as defined by European actors (economic interests, fighting against unemployment and limiting political unrest, or even international relations with countries in the region).

One interesting example in this respect is that of Moroccan officials often mentioning dignity and (self-)respect as important motivations for their country's policy in matters of migration and border control. European officials overwhelmingly interpret these arguments as purely tactical, downplaying their importance, while researchers pay little attention to them.<sup>[2]</sup> I argue that the discourses of Moroccan officials should be taken as seriously as the discourses promoted by EU and Member State officials. This does not mean that they should be immune to critical analysis, but that the logic of these motives should also be examined. Dignity and respect are mentioned mostly in relation to the EU's visa policy, and the difficulty (some) Moroccans experience in obtaining visas, as well as the humiliations they encounter in the process. Although 'visa facilitation,' a relatively new bargaining chip offered by the EU after the Arab revolutions, would not really change the situation for most Moroccans in relation to the possibility of obtaining a visa, Moroccan officials insisted on negotiating such an agreement. They insisted particularly on the need to negotiate a visa facilitation agreement without making it conditional to the signature of a readmission agreement, with conditionality being interpreted as paternalistic, unfair, and contemptuous.

Following this line of argumentation, the dignity of the Moroccan people was repeatedly asserted, and often equated with, or used as a symbol for, the dignity of the State. Denouncing the disrespect of EU and European Member State officials is very close to the denunciation of European visas as a type of '*hogra*.' Indeed, a study showed that visas were perceived as such by the Moroccan citizens, especially the youth (Chattou, Aït Ben Lmadani, and Diopyaye 2012). This Arabic term usually refers to the humiliation imposed by the State — i.e., the contempt of the government for its citizens. It has been widely used in the context of the revolutions in North Africa beginning in 2011, and it is frequently used to qualify the treatment of the unemployed by the government. Both the Moroccan population and officials thus tend to equate the requirements of the EU and its Member States in migration matters with a form of international contempt, a negative sign for Moroccan nationals — and by extension in this context, the international standing or status of the Moroccan state. This points to two important dimensions concerning the attempt to decentre the study of European borders and more generally of migration and border policies. The first relates to the issue of autonomy in the reflection on thinking about international relations, while the second concerns the issue of language in studying international relations and as part of 'border thinking.'

Indeed, the importance and recurrence of 'dignity' and the parallel between a domestic situation and international relations highlight the importance of autonomy as a political concept. As Tickner (2003: 319) shows,

in many third world contexts, autonomy ... occupies a more predominant place in thinking about IR ... from the national borders outwards, autonomy is considered fundamental to the practice of third world IR. Rather than being rooted in juridical notions of sovereignty, it is markedly a political concept, and is viewed as an instrumental tool for safeguarding against the most noxious effects of the international system ... autonomy acquires meaning in and of itself when viewed from the perspective of weak actors, given its symbolic association with factors historically denied

# EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies

Written by Nora El Qadim

to the third world.

These factors include dignity. The insistence of Moroccan actors on dignity thus appears to be more than a tactical claim, but rather part of a broader argument that holds it up as a symbol of the state's autonomy and its status in the international system. In addition, the use of a term usually referring to domestic politics, *hogra*, to describe an international phenomenon underlines the articulation, also noted by Tickner, of both contexts as asserting representations of autonomy.

Additionally, the case of Moroccan reactions to European offers in migration negotiations, and in particular the insistence of negotiators on visa facilitation, is also an interesting reminder of the importance of language and 'thinking in between languages' (Mignolo 2000: part 3). Indeed, it is useful to re-think the motivations of the Moroccan negotiators. Contextualising the arguments of Moroccan officials in a broader discourse on *hogra*, rather than insisting on an undefined 'culture,' is part of analysing representations. These arguments relating to dignity and respect matter as such — and not only because of the economic consequences of migration control. The use of the term *hogra* in relation to arguments on dignity in this matter goes to show that the Moroccan population and officials interpret freedom of circulation as a symbol of (international) economic and social privilege. This is no doubt the reason why the EU and EU Member State officials, as beneficiaries of this privilege, dismiss relatively easily the idea of 'respect' in relation to Morocco. Nevertheless, paying attention to the language used is helpful here in order to capture the symbolic dimension of migration control that the differentiated possibilities for free circulation also carry. The issue of language, of thinking 'in between languages' is thus closely connected here to a better consideration of the symbolic dimension and the role of representations in IR.

## Conclusion

Building on the existing post- and decolonial critique of IR, security studies, and more recently EU studies, I have tried to identify tools and strategies for decentring the study of the EU's external policies. Through the study of EU-Morocco negotiations on migration, I have shown that implementing a decentring agenda requires engaging with non-Western actors. This means not only making efforts to access different sources and actors, but examining their discourses. Here the displacement of the rationalist psyche usually attributed to states in the analysis of foreign policy can help by, first, deconstructing the assumed linearity and rationality of the actions of European officials and, second, understanding the rationale of non-European officials and how they interact with the ambitions of EU migration policies.

This paper also contends that negotiations on migration, including international negotiations on migration and border control more generally, are a particularly interesting case for the decentring agenda because migration policies concern the very definition and redefinition of borders between states, between 'destination countries' or 'origin'/transit countries.' As such, they are the locus of asymmetrical contestation between people and their free movement. This asymmetry in the freedom of circulation is indeed constantly questioned, re-asserted, and/or redefined in these negotiations.

## Notes

[1] This was created in 1995 within the Secretariat of the EU Commission.

[2] There was only one exception out of forty interviews conducted with EU and French officials.

## References

Acharya, A. (1995). *The Periphery as the Core: The Third World and Security Studies*. *Mars*. Available at : <http://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/1412>

Acharya, A. and Buzan, B. ed. (2010). *Non-Western International Relations Theory. Perspectives on and beyond Asia*. Abingdon ; New York: Routledge.

# EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies

Written by Nora El Qadim

- Barkawi, T. and Laffey, M. (2006). The postcolonial moment in security studies. *Review of International Studies* 32(2): 329-52.
- Belguendouz, A. (2003). *Le Maroc non africain, gendarme de l'Europe? Alerte au projet de loi 02-03 relative à l'entrée et au séjour des étrangers au Maroc, à l'émigration et à l'immigration irrégulières!* Rabat.
- Belguendouz, A. (2005). Expansion et sous-traitance des logiques d'enfermement de l'Union européenne: l'exemple du Maroc. *Cultures et Conflits*, n° 57.
- Betts, A. (2009). *Protection by Persuasion: International Cooperation in the Refugee Regime*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Betts, A. (2011). *Global Migration Governance*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, USA.
- Bigo, D. and Guild, E. (2010). The Transformation of European Border Controls. In: Ryan, B. & Mitsilegas, V. eds. *Extraterritorial Immigration Control. Legal Challenges*. Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. pp. 257-279.
- Bilgin, P. (2004). A Return to "Civilisational Geopolitics" in the Mediterranean? Changing Geopolitical Images of the European Union and Turkey in the Post-Cold War Era. *Geopolitics* 9(2): 269-91.
- Bilgin, P. (2010). The "Western-Centrism" of Security Studies: "Blind Spot" or Constitutive Practice? *Security Dialogue* 41(6): 615-22.
- Bilgin, P. (2016). *How not to think about the Mediterranean "refugee crisis"*. Syddansk Universitet: Center for Mellemøststudier.
- Boswell, C. (2003). The "External Dimension" of EU Immigration and Asylum Policy. *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 79(3): 619-38.
- Brand, L. A. (2006). *Citizens abroad: emigration and the state in the Middle East and North Africa*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Cassarino, J.-P. (2007). Informalising Readmission Agreements in the EU Neighbourhood. *The International Spectator* 42(2): 179-96.
- Cassarino, J.-P. (2010). Dealing with Unbalanced Reciprocities: Cooperation on Readmission and Implications. In : Cassarino, J.-P. ed. *Unbalanced Reciprocities: Cooperation on Readmission in the Euro-Mediterranean Area*. Special edition. Middle East Institute Viewpoints. Washington DC.
- Cassarino, J.-P. (2011). Resilient bilateralism in the cooperation on readmission' In : Cremona, M., Monar, J. & Poli, S. eds. *The External Dimension of the European Union's Area of Freedom, Security and Justice*. College of Europe Studies. Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang Verlag. pp. 191-208
- Cebeci, M. (2012). European Foreign Policy Research Reconsidered: Constructing an 'Ideal Power Europe' through Theory? *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 40(3): 563-83.
- Chakrabarty, D. (2000). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chattou, Z., Lmadani, F.A.B. and Diopyaye, T. (2012). *Printemps Arabe et Migrations Internationales : Evolution des Opinions et des Politiques au Maroc*. 8. San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): RSCAS-Migration Policy Centre.
- Coleman, N. (2009). *European Readmission Policy: Third Country Interests and Refugee Rights*. BRILL.



# EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies

Written by Nora El Qadim

- Côté-Boucher, K., Infantino, F. and Salter, M. B. (2014). Border Security as Practice: An Agenda for Research. *Security Dialogue* 45(3): 195-208.
- Diez, T. (2004). Europe's others and the return of geopolitics. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17(2): 319-35.
- Diez, T. (2005). Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'. *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 33(3): 613-36.
- Doty, R. L. (1996). *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis : U of Minnesota Press.
- El Qadim, N. (2010). La politique migratoire européenne vue du Maroc: contraintes et opportunités. *Politique européenne*, n° 31: 91-118.
- El Qadim, N. (2014). Postcolonial challenges to migration control: French–Moroccan cooperation practices on forced returns. *Security Dialogue* 45 (3): 242-61.
- Ellermann, A. (2008). The limits of unilateral migration control: Deportation and inter-state cooperation. *Government and Opposition* 43(2): 168-89.
- Elmadmad, K. (2004). *La nouvelle loi marocaine du 11 novembre 2003 relative à l'entrée et au séjour des étrangers au Maroc, et à l'émigration et l'immigration irrégulières*. San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): EUI/CARIM-RSCAS.
- Fassin, D. (2005). Compassion and Repression: The Moral Economy of Immigration Policies in France. *Cultural Anthropology* 20 (3): 362-87.
- Fisher Onar, N. and Nicolaïdis, K. (2013). The Decentring Agenda: Europe as a post-colonial power. *Cooperation and Conflict* 48(2): 283-303.
- Gabrielli, L. (2008). Flux et contre-flux entre l'Espagne et le Sénégal. L'externalisation du contrôle des dynamiques migratoires vers l'Afrique de l'Ouest. *Asylon(s)*, n° 3(mars). Available at : <http://www.reseau-terra.eu/article716.html>
- Geddes, A. (2005). Europe's Border Relationships and International Migration Relations. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 43(4): 787-806.
- Greenhill, K. M. (2010). *Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy*. Cornell Studies in Security Affairs. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Guild, E., Carrera, S. and Balzacq, T. (2008). *The changing dynamics of security in an enlarged European Union*. Brussels: CEPS.
- Guiraudon, V. and Lahav, G. (2000). A Reappraisal of the State Sovereignty Debate. *Comparative Political Studies* 33 (2): 163-95.
- Hobson, J. M. (2012). *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Huysmans, J. (2000). The European Union and the Securitization of Migration. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 38(5): 751-77.
- İçduygu, A. and Aksel, D.B. (2014). Two-to-Tango in Migration Diplomacy: Negotiating Readmission Agreement

# EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies

Written by Nora El Qadim

between the eu and Turkey. *European Journal of Migration and Law* 16(3): 337-63.

Iskander, N. (2010). *Creative State: Forty Years of Migration and Development Policy in Morocco and Mexico*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Keohane, R. O. and Nye, J.S. (1977). *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Boston: Little Brown and Company.

Kinnvall, C. (2016). The Postcolonial Has Moved into Europe: Bordering, Security and Ethno-Cultural Belonging. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 54(1): 152-68.

Kunz, R. Lavenex, S. and Panizzon, M. (2011). *Multilayered Migration Governance. The promise of partnership*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Lavenex, S. (2004). EU external governance in "wider Europe". *Journal of European Public Policy* 11(4): 680-700.

Lavenex, S. (2006). Shifting up and out: the foreign policy of European immigration control. *West European Politics* 29(2): 329-50.

Lavenex, S. and Uçarer, E.M. eds. (2002). *Migration and the externalities of European integration*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Lexington Books.

Lavenex, S. and Wichmann, N. (2009). The external governance of EU internal security. *Journal of European Integration* 31(1): 83-102.

Messari, N. and Willis, M. (2003). Analyzing Moroccan Foreign Policy and Relations with Europe. *The Review of International Affairs* 3(2): 152-72.

Mezzadra, S. (2004). The right to escape. *Ephemera. Theory and politics in organization* 4(3): 267-75.

Mignolo, W. D. (2000). *Local histories / Global designs. Coloniality, subaltern knowledges and border thinking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Natter, K. (2013). The Formation of Morocco's Policy Towards Irregular Migration (2000–2007): Political Rationale and Policy Processes. *International Migration*, n/a–n/a.

Nicolaïdis, K. and Howse, R. (2002). 'This Is My EUtopia ...': Narrative as Power' *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 40(4): 767-92.

Pallister-Wilkins, P. (2015, Dec. 09). There's A Focus On The Boats Because The Sea Is Sexier Than The Land: A Reflection on the Centrality of the Boats in the Recent 'Migration Crisis'. *The Disorder Of Things*. Available at : <http://thedisorderofthings.com/2015/12/09/theres-a-focus-on-the-boats-because-the-sea-is-sexier-than-the-land-a-reflection-on-the-centrality-of-the-boats-in-the-recent-migration-crisis/>

Paoletti, E. (2010). *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities: The Case of Italy and Libya*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan.

Patel, K. K. (2013). Provincialising European Union: co-operation and integration in Europe in a historical perspective. *Contemporary European History* 22(4): 649-73.

Putnam, R. D. (1988). 'Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games'. *International Organization* 42(3): 427-60.

# EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies

Written by Nora El Qadim

- Reslow, N. (2012). The Role of Third Countries in EU Migration Policy: The Mobility Partnerships. *European Journal of Migration and Law* 14(4): 393-415.
- Rutazibwa, O. U. (2010). The Problematics of the EU's Ethical (Self)Image in Africa: The EU as an 'Ethical Intervener' and the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 18(2): 209-28.
- Sabaratnam, M. (2011). IR in dialogue... but can we change the subjects? A typology of decolonising strategies for the study of world politics. *Millenium* 39(3): 781-803.
- Sayad, A. (2004). *The Suffering of the Immigrant*. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press.
- Schimmelfennig, F. and Sedelmeier, U. (2004). Governance by conditionality: EU rule transfer to the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy* 11(4): 661-79.
- Teitelbaum, M. S. (1984). Immigration, Refugees, and Foreign Policy. *International Organization* 38(3): 429-50.
- Tickner, A. B. (2003). Seeing IR Differently: Notes from the Third World. *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 32(2): 295-324.
- Tickner, A. B. (2013). Core, Periphery and (Neo)imperialist International Relations. *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3): 627-46.
- Tickner, A. B. and Blaney, D.L. eds. (2012). *Thinking International Relations Differently*. New York: Routledge.
- Tickner, A. B. and Wæver, O. eds. (2007). *International Relations Scholarship Around the World*. New York: Routledge.
- Wolff, S. (2014). The Politics of Negotiating EU Readmission Agreements: Insights from Morocco and Turkey. *European Journal of Migration and Law* 16(1): 69-95.
- Wunderlich, D. (2010). Differentiation and Policy Convergence against Long Odds: Lessons from Implementing EU – Migration Policy in Morocco. *Mediterranean Politics* 15(2): 249-72.
- Wunderlich, D. (2012). The limits of external governance: implementing EU external migration policy. *Journal of European Public Policy* 19(9): 1414-33.
- Le360.ma. (2016, Feb. 27). Migrants clandestins: Mohammed VI s'entretient au téléphone avec Angela Merkel. Available at : <http://www.le360.ma/fr/politique/migrants-clandestins-mohammed-vi-sentretient-au-telephone-avec-angela-merkel-62234>
- Zaragoza C. (2016, Feb. 10). Fortress Europe? Porous Borders and EU Dependence on Neighbour Countries. *E-IR*. <http://www.e-ir.info/2016/01/02/fortress-europe-porous-borders-and-eu-dependence-on-neighbour-countries/>

---

## About the author:

**Nora El Qadim**, is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Paris 8-Vincennes Saint-Denis, and a researcher at the CRESPPA-LabTop. She recently published a book on EU-Morocco negotiations on migration policy entitled *Le gouvernement asymétrique des migrations. Maroc-Union européenne* (Dalloz, 2015). Her research concentrates on migration policies, on the discriminations they create, and on the various forms of resistances that exist when it comes to these policies, especially in the South.

# **EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies**

Written by Nora El Qadim