

# Practices and Power of Knowledge Dissemination

## International Organizations in the Externalization of Migration Management in Morocco and Tunisia

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INKEN BARTELS

**Abstract:** The production and dissemination of knowledge about migration are integral parts of the politics of international migration management. To a large extent, this knowledge is produced by International Organizations (IOs). These play also an active role in its dissemination to third countries in the context of the externalization of European migration policies. In comparison to the power and practices of knowledge production and dissemination by IOs, only few empirical studies however examine how this knowledge actually ›enters‹ the practical management of migration taking place within so-called third countries outside the EU's external borders. Against this background, this article focuses on international conferences and workshops as constitutive situations of disseminating knowledge on migration and its management to North African countries. Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts, the article analyses the contested social process of knowledge dissemination in the context of the externalization of European migration policies, and questions what is at stake for whom when knowledge about migration management is transferred to third countries.

**Keywords:** knowledge dissemination, migration management, International Organizations, Bourdieu, North Africa

»It is not to see migration as a problem, but to promote its management«, a staff member of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said about her organization's interventions in Tunisia in 2015 (Interview, IOM staff, Tunisia 2015). »And there is support that we can offer« (ibid.). With ›we‹, she referred to the numerous International Organizations (IOs) that expanded their services in the country after the revolution in 2011 in order to ›support‹ state and non-state actors in their migration management. The production and dissemination of knowledge has become an integral part of this support. According to my interviewee, the objective of her work was to »integrate the question of migration into the national dynamics« of a country (ibid.). She insisted, however, that it was not »just copy and paste« (ibid.). Instead, the IOM would closely »observe the things« and if »there are certain questions where we think that it would be good to work together« and a feeling that »we should bet-

ter explore these things«, then the IOM would offer its expertise (ibid.). »If there is a need for assistance, we look how we can support their needs. We listen«, she summed up the seemingly supportive and well-meant services for the sending and transit countries which European states and the European Union (EU) have focused on to externalize their migration control policies.

In accordance with the international discourse on migration management, IOs working in the field of migration politics commonly present their services as objective and, therefore, apolitical ›international expertise‹ for state and non-state actors outside Europe. Their services are not ›imposed‹ by force, but offered to their ›partners‹. Yet, in this article, I aim to show how the diverse formats and forums of so-called mutual exchange and partnership that are organized by IOs enable them to mainstream their particular knowledge about how to manage migration into the emerging fields of migration politics in North Africa. While much of the existing literature presents the practices of knowledge dissemination as a process of governmentality, I analyze it as a dynamic and conflictual negotiation process, in which diverse actors participate and compete, with their different strategies and stakes.

I examine the IOs' practices and power of disseminating knowledge in Morocco and Tunisia. I ask how IOs are able to influence the understanding of migration and the possibilities and needs of its control within sending and transit countries, even if, traditionally, state actors in these countries have not perceived migration as their problem and its control as their responsibility. Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of *field*, *habitus*, *capital* and *symbolic power*, I seek to reveal how IOs have been more successful in cooperating with Moroccan and Tunisian ›partners‹ than European states have been in their previous attempts to externalize border and migration controls to their ›neighborhood‹, which were based on repressive means and direct inter-state cooperation. I therefore study the dissemination of knowledge on migration management, and knowledge appropriation and rejection, as a social negotiation process between different actors in an asymmetrically structured transnational *field*. In this way, I direct particular attention to the question of why Moroccan and Tunisian actors would participate in the cooperation on international migration management as it is suggested by IOs. I argue that the *symbolic power* that IOs exercise through the dissemination of knowledge is particularly efficient in externalizing European migration policies, since it is not recognized as such by other actors in the field.

In order to empirically investigate these social negotiation processes, I focus on international conferences and workshops as constitutive situations of disseminating knowledge in sending and transit countries. My analysis is based on fieldwork which

I conducted in Morocco and Tunisia in 2014 and 2015.<sup>1</sup> The specific negotiations between the IOs' promotion of knowledge on migration management and the state and non-state actors' acceptance, rejection, and/or appropriation of it are reconstructed from qualitative interviews and participant observation at international workshops and conferences, which were organized by IOs in these countries. With this article, I thus seek to offer empirical insights into the contested process of knowledge dissemination in the context of the externalization of European migration policies and reveal what is at stake for whom when knowledge about migration management is transferred to sending and transit countries.

## **EXTERNALIZATION OF EUROPEAN MIGRATION POLICIES TO MOROCCO AND TUNISIA**

Despite long-standing attempts by European states to externalize migration policies to North Africa, Moroccan and Tunisian authorities resisted, hesitated, or simply did not implement the policies resulting from the agreements, initiatives, and partnerships concluded throughout the 1990s (see Cassarino 2010). At that time, IOs working in this field only played a minor role in these countries. Their work was tolerated, though it remained focused on small-scale projects, mainly offering direct assistance to migrants in need, or information campaigns to prevent potential migrants from emigration (see, e.g., Valluy 2007; Caillault 2012; Tazzioli 2014). In 2003 and 2004, King Mohammed VI of Morocco and Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali introduced a securitized logic of border control through laws that criminalized unauthorized emigration, and enhanced control of their external sea borders (see Belguendouz 2005; Di Bartolomeo/Fakhoury/Perrin 2010). These policies were reactions on the part of the Moroccan and Tunisian governments to European pressure. They sought to satisfy the demands of the EU and its Member States, and thus to gain financial support from Europe in other fields of international cooperation, such as development or economic integration (see El Qadim 2010). However, since both countries share a long tradition of emigration to Europe and largely profit from remittances sent

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1 | The fieldwork was conducted during two visits, to Morocco from May to August 2014, and to Tunisia from January to April 2015. During this time, I conducted 25 semi-structured interviews and many more informal conversations with various actors, including IOs, state institutions, embassy representatives of donor countries, and NGOs, as well as researchers, activists, and migrants. Participant observation was done at different political, social, and cultural events, including six conferences and workshops, which were organized by IOs themselves.

home from their citizens ›residing abroad‹, they were reluctant to implement further restrictive measures to ›fight against irregular migration‹. Instead, they continued to demand the extension of legal ways of emigration to Europe. Questions of immigration and asylum, in turn, ranked low on the priorities of their governments, who did not understand themselves to be countries of transit or immigration at that time (see Di Bartolomeo/Fakhoury/Perrin 2010; De Haas 2014).

Despite increasingly security-oriented state policies, civil society actors integrated migrants' demands into their struggles for human rights in Morocco and Tunisia. In Morocco, moreover, numerous self-organized migrant associations and support structures were founded in the mid-2000s (see, e.g., Valluy 2007; Schmidt 2015). In Tunisia, in turn, the issue of migration seemed only of marginal concern in the media and public debates at that time (see Planes-Boissac 2010: 14). For NGOs specialized in migrants' rights and migrant self-organizations, the work was difficult in a context in which independent expression and political action were almost impossible (see, e.g., Boubakri 2013; Bartels 2014). Those associations that resisted the repressive conditions were well connected through transnational civil society networks. Their work, however, was not directly supported by the EU or European states.

Based on a new global policy discourse on migration management, which was proactively promoted by IOs like the IOM, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the EU and its Member States introduced a more liberal and humanitarian approach in the mid-2000s. This so-called global and comprehensive approach to migration was meant to offer new incentives to their ›partners‹ in sending and transit countries for cooperation on migration control. Policies under this new approach attempted to turn migration into a ›triple win‹ process for the benefit of all parties involved: receiving and sending states, as well as the migrants themselves (see Kalm 2012). These policies sought to transform migration into an orderly, predictable, and manageable process under the effective control of states. Based on this technocratic understanding of migration, the main concern of migration politics was to design and implement appropriate programs, forums for cooperation and consultation, and the ›right mix‹ of incentives and control. In this context, migration researchers have observed »great confidence« (ibid.: 67) among politicians and practitioners that

»if the knowledge about migration is increased by the collection and dissemination of timely and accurate data, if migration officials get more professional training, if national administrative capacity is enhanced by increased resources and expertise, and if interstate cooperation is pro-

moted. . . *then* migration policy can be used as an effective tool« (ibid.; see also Geiger/Pécoud 2010a).

Based on this assumption, the EU and its Member States sought to disseminate their dominant knowledge on migration management in sending and transit countries outside of Europe, in order to improve their policies and effectively manage migration movements before they reached the external borders of the EU. In practice, IOs became important knowledge producers and service providers for their financially strong member states, most of them European, while implementing this knowledge and these services within more peripheral member states, such as Morocco and Tunisia (see Speer 2014). The introduction of this new approach consequently strengthened the role of IOs, and the IOM in particular, in this field (see e.g. Georgi 2010; Geiger/Pécoud 2014; Frowd 2015).

Morocco and Tunisia became important laboratories for the implementation of the EU's ›global‹ and ›comprehensive‹ policies by IOs (see Gaibazzi/Bellagamba/Dünnwald 2017). In contrast to much of the existing literature, I do not see the actors in these countries as »passive spectators in the background« (ibid.: 11), but as active shapers of developments in this field. In this article, I therefore examine the IOs' practices of knowledge dissemination not as happening »in a vacuum, but in specific historical, socio-political, economic and cultural realities« that influence their effects in a certain context (ibid.: 12). With the help of Bourdieu's concepts of *field*, *habitus*, *capital*, and *symbolic power*, I analyze the effects of knowledge dissemination not as the result of a dominant discourse or rationality, but of the struggles among multiple actors with their own stakes and strategies about relations, resources, and recognition in the transnational field of migration management.

In the following section, I review the literature on the role of IOs in the (re-)production and dissemination of knowledge on international migration management, and discuss the widespread conceptualization of their power and practices in Foucauldian terms. Extending this approach to include actors who spread and receive the dominant knowledge on migration management, I then suggest a perspective inspired by Bourdieu's concepts. Informed by this approach, I subsequently analyze the specific practices and negotiation processes of knowledge dissemination by IOs in the context of the externalization of European migration policies in Morocco and Tunisia. In conclusion, I argue that, since it is not recognized as such, IOs' knowledge dissemination is a particularly powerful and efficient mode of externalization.

## **BEYOND GOVERNMENTALITY: STUDYING KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION BY IOs**

While critical approaches to the knowledge production and dissemination of IOs in the field of migration politics remain marginal, the academic interest in examining the power and practices of IOs in this context has grown in recent years (among others see Andrijasevic/Walters 2010; Georgi 2010; Geiger 2012; Geiger/Pécoud 2014; Hess 2014; Scheel/Ratfisch 2014). Many authors refer to Foucault's analytics of government to conceptualize the power of knowledge within the politics of international migration management. According to them, the dominant discourse of migration management rests on knowledge that, when it becomes accepted as a truth, provides a rationality that justifies and supports the use of power. The production of knowledge provides the discursive grounds by creating a certain reality or ›problem‹, in which the exercise of power seems rational (Kalm 2010: 27f.).

IOs establish these discursive grounds by sharing definitions, categories, and normative standards among the actors involved in the governing of migration. In doing so, they spread often-unquestioned assumptions as well as particular recommendations about the possibilities and needs of its control (see Korneev 2014: 891; Speer 2014: 154). They generate data on migration movements, produce specialized knowledge and know-how about the management of this data, and organize different formats for its dissemination, such as international conferences, workshops, and trainings (see Geiger 2012: 38ff.). While IOs mostly provide services for their member states, some of them have developed their own visions on how to govern migration, and even play a significant role in the construction of the ›reality of migration‹ by identifying and framing certain ›problems of migration‹ (see Geiger/Pécoud 2014). Advancing specific issues, IOs thus take a (pro-)active part in the struggles over the directions of international migration policymaking (see Georgi 2010: 48). Their ›expert knowledge‹ serves politicians and practitioners around the globe in order to justify their choices. Since their knowledge is mostly »presented as ›factual‹, ›neutral‹ and ›objective« (Geiger/Pécoud 2010b: 11), it is difficult for other actors in the field to question. However, as many authors have pointed out, this apparently value-neutral and apolitical knowledge is informed by political orientations, organizational cultures, traditions, and interests (see Lavenex 2007; Boswell 2009; Geiger/Pécoud 2010b). Through these practices of knowledge (re-)production and dissemination, IOs are able to exercise a soft form of influence over the politics of international migration management, often interpreted as a form of »global governmentality« (Geiger/Pécoud 2014: 874; Hess 2014: 258) or the »international conduct of the conduct of countries« (Andrijasevic/Walters 2010: 984). This perspective

highlights how the power of soft and subtle »arts of governing« migration (Karakayali/Tsianos 2007: 7, my translation, IB) influences and structures how migration is perceived, interpreted, and dealt with in a specific context. It further directs attention to the activating modes that seek to make state and non-state actors as well as migrants themselves participate in the international management of migration according to its dominant rationality (see Geiger/Pécoud 2013).

This power to softly spread and implement the knowledge on international migration management assigns IOs an important role in the externalization of European migration policies (see, i.a., Geiger 2011, 2014). According to Geiger,

»EU institutions in their approach to exterritorialize, or territorially ›shift out‹, prevention strategies are highly dependent on specialized intermediary actors, most notable intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). [...] On the basis of their expert knowledge and their wide portfolio of operational capacities, they provide states [...] exceptional opportunities to find practical solutions and outsource (externalize) their mobility-related measures.« (Geiger 2014: 225)

The dissemination of ›their expert knowledge‹ of migration management is one of the ›practical solutions‹ IOs offer EU and European states in order to externalize migration control towards sending and transit countries. Through these practices, IOs have managed to establish themselves as a trusted intermediary between states. Through their capacity-building programs and the organization of conferences, consultations, and trainings, they have been able to exercise a soft influence on diverse actors. However, Betts (2008) emphasizes that, despite their service orientation and dependence on European funding, IOs have their »own institutional interests« (ibid.: 15). As bureaucracies, they would not simply implement the »preferences of states«, but also follow »their own institutional strategies« (ibid.). The negotiations of these institutional interests and strategies between IOs and their member states, however, have so far received little academic attention. This holds especially true for their relations with the wide range of state and non-state actors within those countries in which they implement their projects.

To address these gaps in the literature, I examine how the knowledge produced and promoted by IOs actually ›enters‹ the practical management of migration taking place outside the EU's external borders. Drawing on concepts developed by Bourdieu, I direct attention to the actors who disseminate and receive knowledge in a certain field. The notion of a *field* refers to a social space that is defined by the (power) relations between positions and the *stakes* for which the actors compete (see Bourdieu/Wacquant 1992: 94ff.). The knowledge disseminated in Morocco and Tunisia about migration

management is thus not studied as the effect of a dominant discourse or rationality, but rather as an »object of struggles in the social world and in the sociological world which is committed to producing the truth of the social world« (Bourdieu 2004 [2001]: 115). Accordingly, this knowledge »results from struggles inside institutions and between institutions for what is to count as the legitimate truth« (Bigo 2002: 74) within a field in which different interests are at stake. Importantly, these stakes go beyond purely economic interests; they include strategies to maximize different kinds of individual and institutional resources (forms of *capital*), and to improve and expand actors' positions in the *field*. Examining these struggles in the context of the externalization of European migration policies, I investigate not only the institutions that practically disseminate knowledge about migration and its management, but also consider those who accept, appropriate, or reject it in their countries. Moreover, I open up the black box of these actors in order to reveal the unquestioned assumptions and embodied routines (their *habitus*) that make their action possible. Extending Foucauldian analyses, I bring the social actors, along with their histories and strategies, into the picture, and position their work within a field of particular material and symbolic struggles, power relations, and asymmetric positions. By asking what is at stake for the different actors involved in a certain field of struggles, this perspective helps to reveal why state and non-state actors in countries outside Europe get involved in the field of migration management. I argue that the concept of *symbolic power* is key to understand the success of the IOs' practices of knowledge dissemination as a means of externalizing migration management to sending and transit countries.

## THE GAME OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

»It seems that they are everywhere«, a Moroccan researcher and long-standing observer of migration politics commented on the IOs' expanding activities in the country in 2014 (Conversation, researcher, Morocco 2014). »But in these dialogues in which they organize discussions between the ministries, it is where they include their vision, the content, the orientation, the philosophy«, he added more precisely, directing my attention to the importance of the numerous fora and formats of »mutual exchange« that IOs organize in order to disseminate knowledge on migration management to their »partners« within sending and transit countries. I dedicate this section of the article to an analysis of the social negotiation processes between the various actors who participated in such events in Morocco and Tunisia in 2014 and 2015. First, I introduce the setting of international conferences and shed light on the asymmetrical distribution of *capital* among the participants, which allows IOs and their donors to



set the discourses and rules of these events. Subsequently, I turn to the Moroccan and Tunisian state and non-state actors to examine who is accepted as a relevant *player* and what is *at stake* for those who participate in this *game*. In the third section, I open up the black box of IOs, and ask why they have become interesting partners for Moroccan and Tunisian actors to cooperate with, when they were previously reluctant to do so with European states. Finally, I show how Moroccan and Tunisian actors have learned how to *play by the rules* of this field and make use of their ›partnerships‹ with IOs.

### **The Practices and Power of Workshopping**

While the activities of IOs were for a long time only grudgingly tolerated in Morocco, the situation changed with the King's announcement of the *New Migration Policy* in September 2013. This was part of a general democratic opening of the country in reaction to demands raised by an emboldened Moroccan civil society movement during the Arab Spring. In the following years, government authorities started to call actively for the expertise of IOs. Or, as a Moroccan researcher phrased it, when the ministries ›do not know how to do something, they think that IOM can do everything. Or at least, that it has the technical know-how. So, they approach IOM‹, which shows that the organization had established itself as an important actor through its work in the field in previous years (ibid.). The IOM's staff, on the other hand, was ›well-informed about everything. They take everything‹ (ibid.), he pointed out with a mixture of respect and annoyance. As a consequence, since then, numerous conferences, workshops and roundtable discussions have been organized by the ›international experts‹ of IOs in Morocco.

During my fieldwork in Morocco in 2014, a Moroccan colleague invited me to join such a workshop, which was organized by one of the UN sub-organizations in the country. Afterwards, I added to my field notes: ›While I can stick to my role as an observer, I suddenly find myself in the middle of what Bourdieu would have called the *game* of international migration management: A long, narrow conference hall with oversized, comfortable chairs and golden-framed impressionist pictures on the walls, freezing air conditioning and overstuffed PowerPoint presentations, all celebrating the *New Moroccan Migration Policy*. Thirty people, about half of them ›internationals‹, sit in two rows around a long conference table for about five hours‹ (Observation, UN Workshop, Morocco 2014).

Usually at the center of everyone's attention, the staff of IOs seek to deliver a professional performance. The IOs' employees take on different roles on such occasions: Most of the time, they are invited as ›international experts‹ to comment

on developments in the country under question and propose solutions based on their »home-made expertise« (Interview, IOM staff, Tunisia 2015). But they also act as moderators of seminars, workshops, working groups, or roundtables. This allows them to summarize results and highlight specific points the organization regards as important, while leaving out critical issues with reference to the sheer, omnipresent lack of time.

In contrast to the Moroccan and Tunisian actors in the field, IOs are far more adept at organizing such costly events themselves. They are comparatively well-equipped, due to their funding by the EU and European states. These material resources, or *economic capital* (see Bourdieu/Wacquant 1992: 119), permit them to set the agenda, invite speakers, and edit the publications following such events. Those events, which I observed, bore a surprising resemblance to another across countries and topics. Usually the same people, representing a small number of governmental or international institutions, meet in expensive hotels of the countries' capitals around overcrowded buffets, sharing their experiences and »best practices«, presenting extensive Power-Point presentations with blinking numbers and repetitions of the keywords of international migration management, such as »participative approaches«, »global partnerships«, »shared responsibility« etc. Based on their comparative advantage in *economic capital* and their recognition as international experts (see Bourdieu 1998 [1994]: 47), IOs are able to define and to implement the *rules* of such events. According to Bourdieu, the distribution of different forms of *capital* determines the actors' positions in a *field* (Bourdieu 1986). This advantage in stocks of *economic* and *symbolic capital* indicates the IOs' powerful position in the transnational field of migration management.

While the EU and its Member States do not seem to play a very prominent role at such conferences and workshops at first glance, the discourses dominating such events indicate their symbolic influence. The global policy discourse of migration management, predominantly articulated in French throughout the presentations, discussions, and publications, is usually compatible with European conventions, standards, and definitions in this field. But even beyond explicit references, the discourse barely escapes implicit assumptions of European and international migration policies, such as the prominent dichotomies of legal vs. illegal migration, voluntary vs. forced displacements, victims vs. criminals. Even when no representatives of the EU or its Member States sit at the table, they still intervene in *symbolic struggles* over the directions and developments of migration policies in Morocco or Tunisia through the knowledge that is disseminated by IOs. European states and the EU influence policymaking within these countries by financing IOs – who, as trusted intermediaries, exercise a *symbolic power* via their knowledge production and dissemination. With

Bourdieu's concepts, the knowledge production and dissemination by IOs can be described as »the power of making things with words« (Bourdieu 1992 [1987]: 153; my translation, IB) or the »power to constitute the given by stating it, to act upon the world by acting upon the representation of the world« (Bourdieu/Wacquant 1992: 148). This power is employed within the *symbolic struggles* over the imposition of meanings and representations of the social world and its legitimate order (see Bourdieu 1992 [1987]: 147f.). Accordingly, an accepted version of the truth about the social world, and thereby about how to manage migration, emerges from the struggles between actors in a certain field – rather than from a dominant discourse or rationality.

### **Struggles for Positions and Participation**

Discussions at the conferences and workshops I attended often revolved around the same thematic issues and keywords of international migration management. For the distribution of forms of capital and positions in the field, however, it made a difference who was invited and who was not. Among government officials, for example, formal invitations to international conferences and workshops served as an important indicator of their political relevance. As I could observe in Morocco, the newly-appointed *Minister of Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs* was usually invited to such occasions, since he had taken over the official lead on migration issues from the long-standing responsibility of the *Ministry of Interior* in 2013. Whether this symbolic change in responsibilities will lead to a practical redistribution of political power and positions in the field in the future remains to be seen. Nevertheless, through their invitations, IOs enhanced the new ministry's *social capital* by providing »a durable network of more less-institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition« (Bourdieu/Wacquant 1992: 119). In this way, IOs thus strengthened the position of the new ministry in the Moroccan field of migration politics.

In Tunisia, post-revolutionary struggles about political positions and resources were still ongoing at the time of my fieldwork in 2015. The question of which national institution would become the most relevant in the field of migration politics was still open. Different ministries, notably the *Ministry of External Affairs*, the *Ministry of the Interior* and the *Ministry of Social Affairs*, dealt with different aspects of migration. Nationally as well as internationally, they struggled for recognition and resources in order to support their different priorities. Civil society actors questioned the cooperation with European states on restrictive migration control, which had predated the revolution. In contrast to the cooperation with the EU and its Member States, IOs

were not perceived as external interventions that actualized a colonial past. The cooperation on the part of IOs and the reference to their ›international expertise‹ even seemed helpful to Tunisian actors as they sought acceptance for their vision and the legitimization of policy changes at the national level (see Korneev 2014: 900). The *social capital* as well as *cultural capital* (in the form of competences, skills, qualifications etc.; see Bourdieu/Wacquant 1992: 119) gained through interactions with IOs can be mobilized as a cultural authority in the national struggles over positions, resources, and recognition. In this way, the benefits of cooperation with IOs can be converted into other resources. In the transnational field of migration management, multiple state and non-state actors have thus interacted according to the more or less explicit *rules* and various forms of *capital* that are at stake on different levels (see Bueger/Gadinger 2008; Scheel et al. 2016).

According to Bourdieu, actors often develop unconscious *strategies* to improve or secure their positions in a field. At the workshops and conferences that I observed in post-revolutionary Tunisia, these strategies to cooperate, appropriate, or reject the dominant discourses and knowledge of IOs were also noticeable among the increasing number of civil society actors within the audience. A young and ethnically diverse audience actively engaged in the debates with representatives of the ministries and IOs, and confronted them with their concerns and demands. Indeed, Tunisian migration policies after the revolution developed in direct interaction with the few old and the many newly-founded civil society groups and migrant (self-)organizations (see Bartels 2014). In Morocco, after years of struggles by civil society actors, the *New Migration Policy* in 2013 was finally and quite surprisingly decreed by the King. While an active civil society has continued to get engaged for migrants' rights and has made itself heard throughout the country and beyond, policymaking has generally remained a very hierarchically-structured process in Morocco. At official events, there seemed to be little room for opposition forces and critical voices from below. Consequently, NGOs or migrant (self-) organizations were often missing at the roundtables and microphones, but were designated a place in the audience. The officially proclaimed participatory and inclusive consultation processes, which started in Morocco in 2013, were thus for all practical purposes turned into diplomatic exchanges between government officials and the ›internationals‹, usually White Europeans, working in the ›transnational galaxy‹ of IOs (Pandolfi/McFalls 2010: 171). These people were said to work particularly hard towards a successful career in the ›international community‹, but often lacked the knowledge about the place and its history that they were supposed to support with their ›expertise‹.

## The Habitus of International Migration Management

Usually the staff of an IO stays between three months and three years in a country, before it is replaced by a new team that is better qualified for the next project of the organization. This »migrant and deterritorialized community« of IOs' early career staff is thus always ready to move on, driven by the *illusio* that »there is still a lot to accomplish« (Pandolfi/McFalls 2010: 183). According to Bourdieu, actors are *taken in by the game* and pursue its stakes based on their emotional or corporeal investments that he called *illusio*. Participation in this game, or field, respectively, denotes a tacit acknowledgement of its rules and structures, which constitute an effective constraint on action, because they operate at the semiconscious or unconscious level. They constitute what Bourdieu defined as *doxa*, a »silent experience of the world«, that which »goes without saying« (Jackson 2008: 167; see also Bourdieu 1977 [1972]: 167f.). The self-evident beliefs and values, and the tacitly acknowledged *rules of the game*, do not dictate, but inform the participants' actions and behavior in the field (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 80ff.).

At the conferences in Morocco and Tunisia, I could observe how the IOs' staff played the game of international migration management very skillfully. »Their teams are well positioned at the conference: The team of the IOM is present, with three members always first to take a seat, keen and concentrated, and also excited or nervous to start working. The team of the UNHCR joins them. A representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) takes a seat at the table. In terms of content, a difference in their positions is hardly noticeable. They rather complete each other – in their colorful presentations full of complex charts and graphs, as well as at the lunch table. Eating salmon and drinking Diet Coke, the young professionals discuss the morning session. They complain about the contributions of some participants, notably of the Moroccan researchers. They wonder what [those researchers] might have meant with their questions about the UNHCR's mandate and motivation in Morocco. [...] It seems that the debates of the early 2000s about the role of the UNHCR in Morocco among migration researchers and activists in the country are unfamiliar to them« (Observations, UN workshop, Morocco 2014).

Often in their first job after graduation, the staffers of IOs seem highly motivated and passionate to support the country that the organization has chosen to send them to. In this respect, the staffers working for IOs in Morocco and Tunisia share a strong sense of identification with their respective organization and a rather unquestioned belief in the benefits of its mission. At the same time, however, the employees' *individual habitus* can be characterized as very career-oriented, mobile, and motivated to move on. They face the need to prove their skills and knowledge, and make personal

contacts in this field in order to leave with an excellent recommendation for their next mission. Their work thus seems to be driven as much by their embodied competition over individual stocks of *cultural* and *social capital* as by their *illusioic belief* in the benefits of international migration management. Not only collective actors, but also individual ones have thus developed *strategies* to improve or secure their positions in a field.

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* provides analytical access to the semi-conscious orientations and *engine* of the actors involved in this game. This is generated by the sum of external structures internalized by actors, which enable them to function effectively in the field (see Bourdieu 1977 [1972]: 82). In this respect, the IOs' staff, with their competitive *habitus* and their unquestioning belief in the merits of the mission, *fits* the transnational field of migration management, which is structured by neoliberal and humanitarian logics, and by a colonial history of ›international interventions‹ in North Africa (see Bartels 2017). While Bourdieu mostly referred to the *individual habitus* of people, the habitus concept can also be applied to study collective actors, such as IOs (see Jackson 2009). The latter can be conceptualized simultaneously as collective actors within a transnational field, as well as bureaucratic fields crowded with individual actors. While individual actors compete for positions within the organizations, they ›are likely to develop similar dispositions and thus similar practices‹ (ibid.: 107) which crystallize into a *collective habitus*. This collective habitus, in turn, dominates the organizations' outward performance and agency in the transnational field of migration management. Working on its implementation side, the staff of an IO, for example, commonly shares a neutral view of itself as being in a position that does not allow for any political decisions. Instead, the employees only follow the project guidelines, administrative rules, and terms of reference that were negotiated and decided upon in the headquarters of their organizations, donors, and governments. However, for many of my interview partners, it was important to emphasize that ›nothing is imposed‹ but originates in the demands of Moroccan and Tunisian authorities. These individual dispositions are also reflected in the organizations' self-presentation. They permit the IOs to play according to the implicit rules of the transnational field of migration management and function as acceptable ›partners‹ for Moroccan and Tunisian actors.

### **Cooperation, Confrontation, and Appropriation**

As indicated above, in 2013, after the Moroccan king announced the *New Migration Policy*, government officials suddenly called for ›experts‹ in order to elaborate on and implement the new policies. However, civil society activists and researchers who

had already worked for a long time on these issues in the country saw themselves falling behind the expanding interventions of IOs. The knowledge of these ›local experts‹ was not recognized as valuable expertise. The Moroccan state actors instead preferred to cooperate with the ›international experts‹ of the IOs and to make use of their dominant knowledge. »Every time that there is a project, they [the IOs] take it. If there is a need expressed at the level of a ministry, they contact it and say ›we take it‹, ›we will do it for you!‹«, the Moroccan researcher quoted above complained during a coffee break at a workshop (Conversation, researcher, Mor. 2014). However, the IOs »do not have a real expertise. They just take existing bibliographies, they use your work, but they never say it« (ibid.). From the perspective of researchers and activists, the new governmental rhetoric of participation and inclusion turned for all practical purposes into an unsatisfactory process of international consultations and top-down information. These researchers and activists criticized this process, explaining that the involvement of IOs would legitimize the ›participatory‹ processes announced by the Moroccan government. The situation shows that the question of whose knowledge is valuable and who is accepted as an expert in the field is contested within the transnational field of migration management.

Furthermore, this policymaking *à la Marocaine* is illustrative of the king's *feel for the game* of international migration management. He knows how to play by its rules and to maneuver the country through the demands and challenges of its politics by taking some progressive steps forward without making too many truly democratic concessions. Rhetorically, Moroccan government officials have appropriated and eloquently replicated the international discourses spread by IOs. »Morocco stands for a global and integrated approach«, a representative of the new Moroccan migration ministry announced at one of the workshops (Observations, UN workshop, Mor. 2014). He highlighted the »shared responsibility« Morocco would in turn expect from the international community – including financial resources (ibid.). On the same occasion, he explicitly demanded the IOs' help in Morocco to »fight against irregular migration« and thanked them for their support in the development of recent law (ibid.). According to his presentation, the three new Moroccan laws on asylum, integration, and anti-trafficking would entail a chapter on cooperation with IOs. Such cooperation serves the Moroccan authorities not only within the national struggle for power and positions, but also on the international level. Through the appropriation of its dominant discourses and expert knowledge, the Moroccan authorities have been able to reemploy the *cultural capital* of international migration management in order to *convert* it into economic and social benefits in international negotiations.

Moreover, this complicity permits Moroccan authorities to avoid struggles with ›national experts‹. »They do not call for national experts, jurists, economists, etc.

They call for international experts because those organizations, they are more discreet, they are not so critical«, explained the Moroccan researcher, sharing another observation (Conversation, researcher, Morocco 2014). The representatives of IOs would act in accordance with their institutions' apolitical mandates and diplomatic practices and thus remain uncritical towards state politics (see Korneev 2014: 898f.). During the conferences and workshops that I attended, the staff of IOs did not openly criticize their member states, but took rather moderating and pacifying positions. In turn, many Moroccan and Tunisian actors – whether state or non-state – tried to win their trust and favor. During the breaks of such events, the IOs' staffers were often surrounded by crowds of participants, distributing their cards and publications from large white plastic bags.

Generally, it was not easy to find critical voices in such situations of material and symbolic knowledge dissemination. »The IOM does many things, they have published this study recently about trafficking, it is very well known«, a participant told me during lunch at a conference in Tunisia (Conversation, researcher, Tunisia 2015). From his point of view, the IOM has nothing to do with the externalization of European migration policies. »There are other associations that deal with it«, he argued and referred to Frontex as an example (ibid.). In contrast to the actors working »at the border« (ibid.), the IOM or the ICMPD are mostly perceived as scientific experts rather than as political actors within the transnational field of migration management, even though the boundaries between science and politics are practically blurred in this field. This expert position gives a »doxic aura of legitimacy, universality and naturalness« (Pouliot 2004: 13) to the IOs' discourses. This *doxic belief* in the separation between apparently neutral science and mistrusted politics thereby assists in the *misrecognition* of the *symbolic power* of IOs to spread a legitimate way of dealing with migration and their active role in the externalization of European migration policies to Morocco and Tunisia.

## CONCLUSION

By giving workshops and organizing conferences to share ›best practices‹, ›international standards‹, and ›lessons learned‹ from other countries, as well as their own recommendations, IOs have aimed to establish the dominant assumptions and keywords of international migration management among a wide range of actors in Morocco and Tunisia. Appearing as neutral and objective experts, their staff have sought to (in-)form state and non-state actors, to support them in the development of definitions, categories, and indicators to detect the according phenomena in their own countries,



and to promote political and administrative solutions in line with the global language and dominant understanding of migration management. In this article, I analyzed the practices and power of IOs in the transnational processes of knowledge dissemination. With the help of Bourdieu's concepts, I highlighted the institutional strategies and stakes of various actors involved in this game and have thus shown that the dissemination of knowledge on migration management is a contested negotiation process in which its recipients play an active role.

»First, we need statistics, numbers, facts, etc. in order to develop policies, measures, etc. afterwards« was a view shared by many participants at the conferences in Morocco and Tunisia. At such occasions, it seemed that for their various implicit and explicit strategies and ambitions, many state and non-state actors in these countries had appropriated the knowledge disseminated by IOs and learned how to play by the rules of the game of international migration management. As this knowledge became »internalized by other actors as both natural and legitimate« (Jackson 2009: 111), the *symbolic power* of IOs to externalize concepts and practices of migration control has become a welcome alternative to the explicit pressure by European states. Embedded and embodied in the actors' modes of action, cognition, and beliefs, this symbolic influence often remained misrecognized as such (see Bourdieu/Wacquant 1992: 166). Drawing on the participation of politicians and administrations from sending and transit countries, this influence was particularly efficient as a form of »violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity« (ibid.: 171). The IOs' vision of international migration management is thus not imposed on other actors in the field but appears as self-evident and therefore legitimate to them. It enables Moroccan and Tunisian actors to participate in this game without appearing to be directly forced to do so by European state actors, whose interventions in the field more openly reflect the asymmetrical power relations inherited from a colonial past. The *doxic belief* in the objectivity and the neutrality of »international expertise«, in turn, covers the active role of IOs in the externalization and expansion of European migration policies in North Africa and their involvement in the reproduction of power relations in the field. The *symbolic power* of their interventions to integrate state and non-state actors in sending and transit countries into the international management of migration therefore remains widely misrecognized.

In this article, I have proposed to analyze the knowledge on migration management that actually enters Moroccan and Tunisian politics of migration control not as the effect of a dominant »global« rationality or discourse that disciplines the practices of »local« actors, but as the outcome of concrete social negotiation processes in the trans-Mediterranean field of migration management. With the help of Bourdieu's concepts, I have shown that the dissemination of knowledge by IOs in the context of

the externalization of European migration policies is not a smooth top-down process but marked by struggles and strategies among and within the various state and non-state actors involved, including those that are otherwise often conceived as its passive recipients.

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# mOvements

Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies

Wissensproduktionen der Migration

[transcript]