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# From the Barcelona Process to the Arab Spring: The Role of Emotions in the EU Migration Policy towards the Mediterranean Countries

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## Abstract

Since the 1990s, the issue of migration has gained in importance in the framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Over time, EU policy has progressively shifted from a "normative-comprehensive" toolbox aiming at tackling the root causes of migration through development aid, towards a more restrictive control-oriented toolbox (including practices of policing, surveillance and semi-militarized measures) designed to put an immediate stop to migration flows to Europe. This significant shift blemishes the image of the EU as a "normative power" and contravenes the original region-building spirit at the core of the Barcelona Process. In order to explain this change, I propose an emotional approach, centring on insights of social psychology and more generally located within constructivism in international relations. An in-depth discourse analysis of official EU documents, as well as an analysis of resulting practices on the ground reveal the causal link between the *socially constructed fear of migrants* and the EU's departure from the normative approach to migration towards a more control-oriented one.

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# Introduction

"Please, take my migrants" (14.04.11), "Fear of Foreigners" (3.3.11), "Immigration flood to spell end of Europe?" (23.11.11), "Europe and immigration: troubles with migrants" (22.11.07), "The growth of Islamophobia" (30.07.11): these sensational headlines from the international press are directly associated with the famous metaphor of "Fortress Europe" which has come to symbolize the restrictive migration policy of the European Union towards its Mediterranean neighbours in recent years. However, it has not always been the case. Focusing on migration issues in the framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations, one clearly observes an incremental change in the policy since the launching of the Barcelona Process in 1995. Indeed, over time, the EU policy has progressively shifted from a "normative-comprehensive" toolbox aiming at tackling the root causes of migration through development aid, towards a more restrictive control-oriented toolbox (including practices of policing, surveillance and semi-militarized measures) designed to stop immediately flows of migrants to Europe. This significant shift in the EU policy blemishes the image of the EU as a "normative power" and contravenes the original region-building spirit at the core of the Barcelona Process. Furthermore, it matters a great deal to understand why and how this shift has occurred since it has a strong impact not just on questions of migration management but also on refugee protection, development and stability in sending and transit countries, and on EU relations with third countries.

In order to explain this puzzling change in the EU foreign policy towards the Mediterranean, I propose an emotional approach, centred on insights of social psychology and more generally located within constructivism in international relations. I suggest that the restrictive policy of the EU towards its Mediterranean neighbours corresponds to the *behaviour of an actor acting under the influence of fear*. This emotional explanation of the EU foreign policy sounds counterintuitive and stands in sharp contrast to the traditional views on EU external relations that consider Europe either as an ethical "normative power", driven by the "ambition to be a force for good" in the world through the promotion of its norms and values; or as a rational state-like actor motivated by considerations of hard power distribution and pure material interests. Thus the aim of my research is to add an emotional dimension to the study of EU foreign policy by asking the following research question: how does *fear* influence EU foreign policy in the context of migration? Throughout this research, I will show how fear of migrants has been socially constructed over the years at the EU level and how it has ultimately influenced its external relations with the Mediterranean neighbours on

migration issues. Putting it another way, I will reveal the causal mechanism linking *emotions to motions* – that is, the social construction of fear through discourses and practices that lead to the adoption of a more security-driven policy at the expense of a declared, normative, multilateral approach in the Mediterranean area.

*The main argument and the structure of the paper*

This research will propound the thesis that the *socially constructed* fear of migrants has a lasting impact on the EU migration policy in the framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. The specific framing of migration as a security threat at the EU level through securitization processes both at the discourse and practical levels gives rise to and fuels the emotion of fear that in turn affects its foreign policy. Assuming that political entities have the capacity to feel emotions, they adopt an emotional behaviour on the international scene that corresponds to the meaning and feeling they attribute to a specific phenomenon. Therefore, under the grip of fear of migrants, the European Union privileges a rather restrictive migration policy in its dealing with Mediterranean countries – perceived as the best means to defend itself against a manifold threat linked to migration. Emotional practices in the form of externalization of control to third countries, or the regime of readmission agreements actively promoted by the EU, betray a reflex of closure and overprotection that aims at keeping migrants far away.

In the following sections of the paper, I will elaborate on the theoretical framework and conceptual arguments, emphasizing the importance of emotions in the study of international affairs. Then, the second section of the paper illustrates the theoretical arguments through an analysis of the EU migration policy towards its Mediterranean neighbours at three turning points: the launching of the Barcelona Process in 1995, the initiative of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2004 and the latest developments triggered by the Arab Spring in 2011. The concluding part of the paper summarizes the main findings of the research, discusses its implications and suggests further lines of research.

## “Emotions Matter”

Traditionally, international relations theory has maintained an ambivalent relationship towards the role and importance of emotions in the study of international politics. Among the progenitors of the discipline, a great number of significant political philosophers such as Machiavelli and Hobbes shed light on the pivotal role of emotions (notably fear, honour and greed). However, since the Enlightenment, the assumption of the rational actor has largely accompanied international relations theory, relegating emotions to a source of mistakes and thus downgrading their importance (Mercer 2006).

Yet, despite the under-theoretization of emotions, they have always been present in international politics. Indeed, relations among states and non-state actors are infused with emotional significance and emotional dynamics play a substantial role in a wide range of issues pertaining to world politics. As Crawford underlines, “systemic analysis of emotion may have important implications for the practices of diplomacy, negotiation, and post-conflict building” (2000: 116). To these broad subjects one can add more specifically the idea of nationalism which encapsulates both love and hate, deterrence which relies mainly on fear, and emotions such as humiliation, anger, desire for revenge and distrust that may also fuel ongoing conflicts or even trigger new ones. In a more positive light, one can also adduce another kind of emotions such as empathy, compassion, trust or even love that might be influential in the building of international regimes, security communities and in the promotion of human rights or humanitarian interventions. The resurgence of interest in the role of emotions across this wide range of political issues is exemplified by various researches in international relations *(*Saurette 2006; Löwenheim & Heimann 2008; Bleiker & Hutchison 2008; Fattah & Fierke 2009; Moïsi 2009; Ross 2010*)*. The bottom line is that emotions are part and parcel of human nature and as such, it is necessary to examine precisely the ways through which emotions and emotional relationships affect individuals’ and groups’ ways of perceiving, thinking and acting (Crawford 2000: 155).

In this regard, it is crucial to consider the emotional dimension of the state: can states have emotions at all? From a pure materialist point of view, states are abstract corporate actors and as such, cannot feel. Only individuals with living bodies possess the capacity to have emotions (Ross 2006). However, in an attempt to reconcile emotions and states, Alexander Wendt (2004) argues that states are super-organisms that possess collective consciousness and hence might also experience emotions. Through their practices, states constitute each other as “persons”, having interests, fears, etc. Following his line, I assume that a theoretically

productive analogy can be made between individuals and states. This anthropomorphism is possible since states are collectivities of conscious individuals (state rulers, officials, citizens) with emotions (Saurette 2006). Another justification for the emotional dimension of the state maintains that individuals, embedded in the structure of the state, are agents with specific role identities that engender emotions distinct from their personal emotions (Löwenheim & Heimann 2008).

# Theoretical Arguments: The Social Construction of Fear and its Impact on the European Union's Foreign Policy

## Preliminary Remarks: Basic Assumptions of the Constructivist Approach to Emotions

Before proceeding to the gist of the argument, a definitional note is in order given the welter of definitions of emotion. Indeed, across a wide range of disciplines including biology, philosophy, anthropology, sociology and psychology, there have been long-lasting disagreements on the definition of emotion, its variation across cultures, its biological components, and even controversy about whether biological changes associated with emotion precede or follow cognition (Crawford 2000: 123). The dominant conventional view holds that emotions are unconscious, beyond an actor's control, and separate from cognition. However, this argument has been extensively challenged and new researches have on the contrary highlighted the complex interplay between emotion and cognition (Mercer 2005). I will adopt this second line of thought in my argument and rely on two basic assumptions about emotions that have also been adopted by the constructivist approach (Ross 2006: 200).

First, constructivists share the idea that emotions are cognitive beliefs rather than bodily states. According to Martha Nussbaum (2001: 4), emotions are "appraisals or value judgments which ascribe to things and persons outside the person's own control, great importance for the person's own flourishing". Emotions are an expression of our vulnerability to people and events that we do not control. Constituting an important aspect of the cognitive psychology of emotions, the idea of appraisal indicates that emotional responses are partly based on a person's evaluation of an event's significance for his or her well-being. Positive emotions such as happiness relate to the presence of a valued object and the ability to realize one's goals, while negative emotions such as betrayal or humiliation arise from a loss of dignity and safety and a subsequent inability to flourish (ibid.). In the same vein, Epstein (1993) argues that the experience of negative emotions is a primary consequence of the perception of threats to basic needs, which are themselves socially constructed.

The second assumption draws more specifically on the social constructivist theories in psychology and sociology. Indeed, constructivists add to the core feature of the cognitive view that cognitive beliefs are *socially* and *intersubjectively* constituted (Ross 2006: 200). They postulate that emotions are socio-cultural phenomena. Emotion, while most often experienced at the individual level, is inherently social and relational. One theorist writes:

“turning our attention away from physiological states of individuals to the unfolding social practices opens up the possibility that many emotions can exist only in the reciprocal exchanges of a social encounter” (Harré 1986: 5). Hence the sociological approach to emotions has challenged conventional ideas about them as innate or universal responses to external stimuli. Emotions are definitely socially constructed. As McCarthy (1989: 57) asserted, “my feelings are social, that is, they are constituted and sustained by group processes. They are irreducible to the bodily organism and to the particular individual that feels them”. This means that the appraisals or value judgments referred to by Nussbaum are not entirely cognitive. Individuals within a culture make appraisals and value judgments according to their past experiences and cultural knowledge. Some emotional reactions are universal, like the fear triggered by the perception of threat. However, the threat perception itself is culturally and socially determined, as we shall see in the following parts of the paper.

So, in accordance with our basic assumptions about emotions, how we feel is initially determined by how we appraise a given situation, and this is guided to a large extent by social shared understanding/knowledge of a specific phenomenon. This, then, is the causal process linking meaning and emotion to action that will be decomposed and analyzed in this part of the paper. In a nutshell, the emotion at the heart of this research is fear. As we shall see, fear arises from the specific meaning of “threat” that consequently triggers a less-daring action. Conversely, risk-taking refers to the tendency to engage in behaviours that are potentially harmful or dangerous and yet at the same time provide the opportunity for positive outcomes. In the context of this study on EU migration policy, “risk-taking” is closely linked to the normative prescriptions based on development aid to the Mediterranean partner countries since there are no guarantees of obtaining immediate results of reducing migration. This constitutes the very core of my theoretical model and can be schematized as follows:

***Meaning given to a phenomenon (threat) ⇒ Emotion (fear) ⇒ Action (no risks)***

So, first of all, I will focus on the trigger of the emotion of fear, that is, the socially constructed perception of threat. Then, the mechanism through which fear is socially constructed will be scrutinized, emphasizing securitization processes and the role of human agency in this dynamic. In the last stage, I will consider the impact of fear on foreign policy, thus linking emotion to action. In order to make the theoretical argument clearer, illustrations from the empirical case study are incorporated in the explanation.

## The Social Construction of Fear: Its Components, Mechanism and Dynamics

In order to decrypt the social construction of fear, it is first necessary to recall that fear is basically an emotional reaction to the perception of a threat. It has also been defined as "displeasure about the prospect of an undesirable outcome" (Barbalet 1998: 151). The point is that, if fear is the resulting emotion of the appraisal process, the specific phenomenon under study has been largely *interpreted* as a threat. This is the particular meaning of "threat" that informs the appraisal process and triggers the negative emotion of fear towards migrants. In international relations literature, a threat is defined as a situation in which one agent or group has either the capability or intention to inflict a negative consequence on another agent or group (Davis 2000: 10). Threats are manifold but they are commonly divided into two broad categories: tangible and symbolic threats. Threats that are tangible threaten a material or concrete good such as physical security and personal wealth, whereas symbolic threats are concerned with beliefs, values and norms that constitute an individual's or in-group's worldview and identity. Both kinds of threats are unwelcome and both are fear-provoking because they constitute potential dangers for the individual's basic needs and well-being. It is worth noting that we are accustomed to thinking about individuals' basic needs as merely physical security and economic welfare. Yet taking into account the psychological needs of every individual, we should pay greater attention to the notion of ontological security, i.e. the security of one's identity. Indeed, all actors need a stable sense of who they individually are in order to act (Mitzen 2004). In this respect, both tangible and intangible threats have the potential to shake one's ontological security, which is essential to the well-being of every social actor.

Applying these theoretical observations to the EU case suggests that the "*fear of migrants*" has been socially constructed over the years. In itself, migration is a neutral event, which can be interpreted in different ways. Indeed, there are different possible understandings of the phenomenon: are immigrants and refugees a beneficial economic resource for a country (as it was considered in the 1950s and 1960s in Europe)? Are refugees human rights holders who have a right to be protected under international law? Are they a danger for social stability? As numerous studies have pointed out (Huysmans 2006; Bigo 2002), migrants have increasingly been viewed as posing security threats to various realms of life in the European member countries. Huysmans argues that migrants are portrayed in the EU and its member states as posing dangers in three related areas: public order may be undermined through criminal

activities including drug and people trafficking, theft and terrorism; the domestic labour market may be destabilized; and cultural identity may be challenged (2006: 8). In sum, the "fear of migrants" encapsulates and crystallizes a wide range of tangible and symbolic threats not only to the individuals but also to the very "essence" of European societies. In this respect, one cannot help mentioning the notion of "societal security" defined by Buzan et al. (1998: 23) as "the ability of a society to persist in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or actual threats. More specifically, it is about the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture, association, and religious and national identity and custom". In other words, societal security has to do with situations where societies perceive a threat in identity terms.

*When the perception of threat is manifold and dominant, fear becomes embedded in an emotional climate*

The alleged threats posed by migrants are not imminent, but rather diffuse and intangible. The "insidious dangers" associated with migration are particularly fear-provoking because of the "discursive transversality of the immigrant figure" (Bigo 2002) that pertains to various aspects of life (economy, security, identity). Linkages between migration and other perceived threats are easily established because of the extent to which immigration dovetails with other social and economic anxieties in society – from globalization and cultural identity through housing and unemployment (Collinson 2007). Amid this loss of benchmarks, the "foreigner", the "immigrant", the "outsider" becomes a metaphor of what people cannot apprehend. In the long run, when a continuum of threats develops and touches upon many realms of life, the emotion of fear may become prevalent and may generate a "collective negative mood" pervading individuals and societies. An emotional climate in which fear is predominant is mainly associated with the perception of an environment of threat, low control and uncertainty (De Revera & Paez 2007: 243). The emotion of fear fosters a diminished sense of control and an enhanced sense of vulnerability. This deep-seated apprehension about the future may be reinforced by external factors such as terrorist attacks or by objective socioeconomic realities, like a severe economic crisis; all create a negative shared experience. Against this socioeconomic and emotional background, threats may be easily inflated and fears amplified by specific agents, defined in the words of Furedi (2005) as "fear entrepreneurs", as we shall see in the next section of the theoretical framework.

Empirically speaking, it seems that over the last years a negative emotional mood has deeply pervaded the European Union. According to many specialists, Europe has plunged into

an identity crisis and there are palpable signs of profound angst about its future. Europe fears a crisis that would mark the demise of its power on the international stage. There is a pervasive sense of threat from external and internal forces that it can no longer control, like the rise of Islam, the effects of globalization and Europe's imminent cultural transformation (De Wenden 2010; Moïsi 2009). Amid the multiple crises the EU is undergoing, the fear of migrants is amplified because they contribute to the sense of uncertainty about Europe's future. On the geographic level, the EU has encountered difficulties in defining its frontiers ("enlargement fatigue"), and the turbulent debate about the possible accession of Turkey to the EU well reflects the reluctance to integrate a Muslim state into the framework. This also raises questions about the attempt to build a proper European identity: on which basis? Which identity? Which culture? Which place for migrants in European societies? Europe's identity problem is not simply one of "conceptual boundary drawing" (where does Europe end?) but more importantly, a problem of inclusion and exclusion of citizens (who counts as European?) (Fawell 2005). The growing unease about multiculturalism, the challenge posed by terrorists of foreign origins to the peaceful norms of Europe, and the recent crisis of the Eurozone all play a role in this negative emotional climate in which the migrants are perceived to have a detrimental impact.

*How does the social construction of fear take place? Securitization processes and the role of human agency in the making of fear*

As became clear in the preceding part of the paper, the actor's definition of a given situation is crucial for his affective experience (Schachter & Singer 1962). The specific emotion of fear arises from the negative shared knowledge about migrants – that is, from the meaning of "threat" associated with the phenomenon of migration. This interpretation of migrants as a security threat is not obvious or fixed; it occurs in a wider context of contest between ideas and norms in which multiple actors are constantly involved. Thus the next step is to investigate how exactly the "fear of migrants" came to exist at all, that is, through *which mechanism* the social construction of fear occurred. In this respect, securitization processes are absolutely crucial since they attribute the specific meaning of threat to migration and thus significantly contribute to the emergence of the emotion of fear. We shall differentiate between two sorts of securitization processes: through discourses and through practices.

According to Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1993), the political significance of events depends heavily on the language through which they are politicized. Before an event can generate security policies, it needs to be conceived of as an issue of insecurity, and this

conception needs to be sustained by discursively reiterating the event's threatening qualities. According to the securitization theory, insecurity is not a fact of nature but always must be written and talked into existence. The constitutive power of language follows from the fact that certain words and discourses carry particular connotations and historical meanings that they impart to social reality. Hence language has both the capacity to integrate events into a wider network of meanings and to mobilize certain expectations regarding an event (Huysmans 2006: 8). More specifically, securitization is defined as "the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. Securitization can be seen as a more extreme version of politicization, meaning that the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedures" (Buzan, Waever & de Wilde 1993: 22). Applied to the case of migration, such securitarian rhetoric can justify restrictive approaches to controlling migration, which may derogate from human rights and constitutional provisions. The distinguishing feature of securitization is a specific rhetorical structure, which emphasizes survival and priority of action "because if the problem is not handled now it will be too late, and we will not exist to remedy our failure" (ibid.: 28).

Apart from the sense of urgency and survival that characterizes a typical securitization process, one can point to another kind of discursive technique of securitization: the use of numbers. Indeed, numbers play a primordial role, particularly relevant to the theme of migration. The notion of "number games" illustrates the significance and role of numbers in political discourses. States authorities, governments and other stakeholders, such as NGOs, interpret and use figures depending on their own interests. "Number games" are characterized by a simple logic: numbers represent "factual truth" hence they provide a solid basis for policy development. At times statistics are quoted in ways that alarm rather than inform (Clandestino Project 2009). In other cases, numbers are replaced by emotion-laden terms expressing the disproportionate extent of a phenomenon and a sense of loss of control: "flood", "invasion", "biblical exodus" are good examples of such a discursive move in the context of migration flows. These metaphors have an existential connotation that allows for securitizing without making the more complex argument about how an increase in numbers endangers the existence of the political community (Huysmans 2006: 48).

The Copenhagen School's work on securitization corresponds to the standard view, which emphasizes the construction of threat through a discursive move. Yet over recent years, the literature on securitization has been enriched by the so-called "sociological approach to securitization" (Balzacq 2010), pioneered by Bigo (2000, 2002, 2008), which privileges the

role of practices over discourses in securitization processes. According to him, "it is possible to securitize certain problems without speech or discourse and the military and the police have known that for a long time. The practical work, discipline and expertise are as important as all forms of discourse". In other words, the acts of the bureaucratic structures or networks linked to security practices and the specific technologies that they use may play a more active role in securitization processes than securitizing speech acts (Huysmans 2004). More precisely, Balzacq (2008: 79) has defined an instrument of securitization as "*an identifiable social or technical "dispositif" or device embodying a specific threat image through which public opinion is configured in order to address a security issue"*. Instruments of securitization postdate successful securitization. They do not construct a threat *per se*; they are built to curb an already accepted threatening entity. By contrast, a securitizing tool is "*an instrument, which by its very nature or by its very functioning transforms the entity it processes into a threat" (*ibid.: 80). While securitization tools may have technical attributes, the reasons they are chosen, how they operate, evolve and their consequences are fundamentally political. In addition, there are symbolic attributes built into policy instruments that "tell the population what the securitizing actor is thinking, and what its collective perception of the problem is" (Peters & Van Nipsen 1998: 3).

It could be useful to combine insights from the two approaches outlined above to study both the discourse and practices of securitization. Indeed, instruments and discourses are interlinked and reinforce each other in the policy process. Discourse often predates (or otherwise constrains the choice of) a policy tool. In the case of the EU migration policy, securitizing discourses prompt the adoption of securitizing tools (or activities) that, by their very intrinsic qualities, convey the idea that asylum seekers and migrants are a security threat to the EU. The use of semi-military guards to intercept migrants across the Mediterranean is a good illustration of such an instrument of securitization.

In any case, the literature on securitization fails to take into account the *emotional dimension* inherent in the securitization process. Indeed, this is the emotion of fear, automatically emerging from the meaning of threat and danger attributed to a given phenomenon that allows exceptional political steps to be taken. The securitization process, involving both discursive and practical elements, is made possible precisely because of the *emotional* capacity of the audience. In the context of the present study, the securitization process sheds light on how an issue framed in terms of security and threat contributes to constructing fear through a discursive and practical move.

*Who are the agents involved in the social construction of fear of migrants?*

A variety of social agents are involved in the interactive process of social construction at different levels of analysis. A recent research about the social construction of threat (and fear) argues in favour of an analysis beginning at the individual level in interaction with the society (Rousseau 2006). Indeed, individuals rarely develop opinions and beliefs in isolation; they acquire information from external sources and probe it through contemplation and communication. In general, communication can be divided into two broad categories: personal communication with others and mass communication, which involves exchanges through media channels. In this respect, it is worth pondering the role of the media and of political elites in the construction of fear. For Furedi (2005), the complex role of the mass media in generating and amplifying collective fears through the evocation of emotions rather than referential information justifies their designation as fear entrepreneurs. Published or broadcast statements by political leaders should also be taken into account in the social construction of fear. These serve as epistemic authorities for the public, affecting its worldview and emotional orientation (Bar Tal 2001: 616). Naturally, elites with access to the mass media will have the greatest influence on how people think and feel (Thrall & Cramer 2009: 10). Regarding the specific case of the EU migration policy towards the Mediterranean countries, a multitude of actors and institutions are involved in a multilayered bureaucratic and political process of decision-making. The management of migratory flows is a complex institutional undertaking within the EU, since migration is an overlapping issue handled both by the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ) and by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (Dimulescu 2011: 161), that is, both in the home affairs and in the foreign policy spheres. Among the different actors defining migration policy, certain ones might well qualify or share some characteristics of fear entrepreneurs who easily link migration to security threats. For example, one actor of prime importance is the Justice and Home Affairs Council. The JHA Council is the forum in which home affairs (interior) ministers and their officials meet to debate and agree upon legislation concerning migration, among other issues. The JHA Council has a reputation as being somewhat conservative and restrictive in its approach, taking its cue from the typically control-oriented officials it is composed of (Boswell & Geddes 2011: 64). Among the other European institutions involved in the policymaking on migration issues in the Euro-Med context, the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament play important roles (for further details, see ibid.: 62-66).

Last but not least, transnational security networks increasingly influence the policy area of migration to the EU that crosses state and supranational levels (Boswell & Geddes 2011: 67). Applied to our case study, if one may regard EU agencies dealing with migration and security professionals as epistemic communities, they play a key role in the social construction of migrants as "threats" to be afraid of. Epistemic communities have been recognized as powerful agents of change: as they deploy their knowledge, they often diffuse new understandings along with technical expertise (ibid.: 402). Harbouring expert knowledge, they are entitled to diffuse new cause-effect understandings of the issue at stake. Security professionals encompass policemen, gendarmes, intelligence services, military people, providers of surveillance technology and risk-assessment experts. Such professionals make sense of and interact with the world on the basis of their self-understanding as those responsible for the regulation and management of dangers in the society. According to Bigo (2002: 63), the professionals in charge of risk management transfer the legitimacy they gain from struggles against terrorists, spies, counterfeiters and other criminals to other targets, most notably people crossing borders, or people born in the country but with foreign parents. Through their technological practices, they managed to create a "truth" about the link between crime, unemployment and migration.

Yet, as mentioned earlier, the process of fear construction is not deterministic but rather dynamic and involves also "desecuritizing actors", such as asylum and migrants law experts, human rights organizations or associations of migrants that may counteract the securitizing moves of fear entrepreneurs by offering a different interpretation of the social reality. These undermine the "security framing" by highlighting the fact that even irregular migrants are entitled to basic human rights. For example, since the operational launching of FRONTEX in 2005, human rights activists and pro-migrant groups have regularly organized protests against its actions before its seat in Warsaw (Leonard 2009: 372). FRONTEX has often been depicted as having launched a "war against migrants" (see Noborder Network 2006).

## The Impact of Fear on Foreign Policy: Exclusionary Emotional Practices

*Meaning given to a phenomenon (threat)* $\Rightarrow$ ***Emotion (fear)*** $\Rightarrow$ ***Action (no risks)***

Having explored the complex mechanism behind the social construction of fear, we can now turn to the impact of emotion on action. As a starting point, it is essential to recall a fundamental principle of the constructivist social theory: people act towards objects on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them. In the same vein, I argue that revealing

the emotional dimension that accompanies a specific meaning enriches our understanding of the ensuing action because how we feel about others determines our interaction with others. This part first conceptualizes the individual-level reaction to fear, then scales it up to states and applies the fear assumption to the foreign policy of the EU regarding migration issues.

*The behavioural characteristics of an actor acting under the grip of fear*

Fear is basically the emotional response to the perception of a threat (either real or exaggerated).

- The fight-or-flight response

At the individual level, commonplace accounts of fear have emphasized the survival function of emotion drawing on Darwin's evolutionary perspective. According to the naturalist view that compares between animal and human emotions, the main reactions to fear can be best summarized by the well-known formula: "fight-or-flight" response in face of danger (Barbalet 1998). In this perspective, emotions are mainly functional: fear undeniably has a positive role, reflecting one's survival instinct and triggering a reflex of defence. In other words, it serves as a self-preservation device. If individuals were constantly fearless and unable to detect any danger or threat to their basic needs, they would not be able to live properly.

Interestingly, fear can be said to have two opposite effects. On the one hand, history has shown that fear can be a constructive force, mobilizing the best energies to overcome difficulties. For example, the deep European fear of a renewed war with Germany after the Second World War may have partly fostered the unexpectedly successful economic integration process – guaranteeing peace until today. On the other hand, fear can assume negative aspects and have damaging effects. When fear becomes excessive, it has a detrimental impact on one's confidence: it damages one's capacity to interact properly with the outer world and gives rise to disproportionate emotional behaviours (Moïsi 2009: 155).

This research focuses on the unnecessary and counterproductive levels of fear towards migrants felt across the EU. As mentioned earlier, the main thesis argues that there is a causal link between the *socially constructed fear of migrants* and the progressive EU departure from the normative-comprehensive approach to migration towards a more restrictive control-oriented approach. The two approaches differ profoundly in their assumptions about how to influence levels of migration and patterns of refugee flows. I call the "normative" toolbox the set of instruments used traditionally by the EU in its relations with third countries (linked to the concept of normative power). Here I refer specifically to the linkage created by the EU between migration and co-development within the framework of regional integration, i.e. the

rationale of region-building encompassing long-term economic reforms and democratization efforts that are likely to improve the life conditions of potential candidates for migration and deter them from migrating. Examples of more concrete instruments are: professional-training aid programmes, the development of employment-creation schemes in the Southern Mediterranean countries etc. By contrast, the "security" toolbox relates to a much more control-oriented approach to migration that aims at physically obstructing the arrival of migrants to the EU. I argue that, to a great extent, this shift corresponds to the behaviour of a fearful actor – as we shall see with a few illustrations.

- To remove the threat

In the fight-or-flight response, the primary response of an actor under the grip of fear is the removal of the threat. If fear has a concrete referent object, then making the source of the danger disappear or keeping it away will be the priority. In the restrictive approach to migration, the increasing "militarization" of migration (Lütterbeck 2006) and the practice of externalization (or "remote control"), which corresponds to the intensifying cooperation between the EU and the Mediterranean countries on migration border management (i.e. technical assistance, and police capacity building), are designed to remove the alleged threat posed by illegal migrants. The aim is clearly to prevent their arrival and to stop them on their way to Europe.

- Diminished risk-taking propensity

When threats are of a pervasive and intangible nature, another reaction to fear is worth underlining, namely the diminished propensity to take risks. Various researches in social psychology have indicated that social actors in a negative mood are more risk-averse (Lerner & Keltner 2000). A few remarks are in order concerning the very notion of "risk-taking". Generally speaking, risk-taking refers to the tendency to engage in behaviours (or policies) that have the potential to be harmful or dangerous. Yet, at the same time, it provides the possibility for a positive outcome. In the context of migration, risk-taking has a slightly negative connotation and is actually a social construct as well. Since the EU perceives the arrival of migrants as a "threat", the choice of a proper policy to tackle the issue naturally entails a "risk". In the context of the two toolboxes used by the EU with regard to migration, the normative-comprehensive approach appears more "risky" for the European countries since it entails a long-term strategy aimed at alleviating the deep-rooted push factors underlying migration in the southern countries. This normative approach "carries risks" because of the

"migration hump"[1] and the uncertainty as to future fruitful results. Moreover, a policy targeting development to reduce migration pressures assumes that recipient countries will be "good performers", using development aid effectively – which cannot always be assumed (Nyberg-Sorensen & al. 2002). The normative-comprehensive approach could be compared with a long-term investment that may not bear immediately valuable results. In contrast, the European preference for a restrictive, control and security-oriented approach to migration stems from the expectation of an immediate and tangible impact on undesired flows of migrants. The focus of this security approach is on direct control and containment of flows, so as to efficiently stop the arrival of undocumented migrants to Europe. It could thus be a risk-averse behaviour arising from a profound feeling of fear of migration.

- Preference for the short term over the long term even if the policy is counterproductive

Related to the previous point, fearful actors engage in a self-protective response: they tend to emphasize the short term rather than the long term, even if the short term is counterproductive (Crawford 2000: 143).

- Overestimation of likelihood of negative events

This overprotective reaction may be amplified by the fact that in situations of decision-making under uncertainty and risk, individuals with negative moods overestimate the likelihood of negative events and underestimate the likelihood of positive events. Even though individual moods may be too ephemeral to make a difference in policy decisions, "longer-term moods" in governments may be more relevant for international relations theorists. For instance, if a state is in decline – losing economic strength, political influence and international prestige – its leaders may make more cautious foreign policy choices in low-risk situations than a state with rising gross national product, political influence and prestige (Crawford 2000: 143-44).

- Over-perception of threat

In the same vein, fearful actors tend to over-perceive threats. The exacerbated sense of impotence and vulnerability contributes to the flawed perception of being at risk even it is not the case. As we shall see in the empirical part of the paper, alarmist rhetoric of politicians, as well as the estimations of specialized agencies such as FRONTEX, are sometimes mistaken and mostly exaggerate the extent of the threats linked to migration flows to the EU.

[1] The migration hump describes the relationship between outward migration and the level of a country's development. It shows that as development takes place and income levels rise, so does migration. People become more able to migrate, and as it takes time for increased income levels and consumer demands to translate into increased domestic production and employment opportunities, strong economic push and pull factors remain. Migration continues to rise with income levels until a threshold is reached that marks the beginning of reduced migration flows. (Sixth report of the Committee for International Development, UK Parliament 2004).

Therefore, my hypothesis is: the more an actor is under the grip of fear, the less it will be ready to take risks and will prefer defensive, preventive or precautionary policies that have a direct and concrete impact on the most urgent security threats. Reformulated in analytical terms: the more there are securitizing indicators, the more fear of migrants is likely to emerge and emotional practices to develop.

*"Fearful emotional practices": A definition*

The emotions associated with a specific interpretation engender corresponding emotional practices. There is a mutually reinforcing dynamic between emotional practices and the structures from which they emerge (Bially Mattern 2011). These emotional practices form and sustain the wider social structure of shared meaning. In this research, I designate the specific policies resulting from the emotion of fear and manifesting a reflex of closure, overprotection and rejection as "fearful emotional practices". Putting it another way, fearful emotional practices are the concrete expression of the behavioural characteristics of an actor under the grip of fear that were just cited above. The reluctance to "take risks" with regard to potential migration flows is translated into fearful emotional practices in the form of "readmission agreements" ("to remove the threat", to "push the danger back") and of the "externalization of control" ("to keep the source of the danger away"). In addition, the securitization instruments mentioned previously constitute important elements of these fearful emotional practices; they are actually the means through which they are implemented and reinforce the meaning of migrants as threats. Therefore, in the following analysis of the EU migration policy, special attention is devoted to the policy prescriptions encapsulating these emotional practices.

## Case Study: The EU Migration Policy towards the Mediterranean Countries

Given the aim of this research (revealing the impact of an emotion [fear] on the design of the EU migration policy in the Euro-Mediterranean context – on the *shift* itself), and the fact that emotion has both a discursive and a behavioural dimension (in the form of emotional practices), I needed to find the "discursive and practical sites" where some elements of the social construction of fear could be identified and traced, and then pinpoint its causal impact on EU external migration policies. The discourse analysis has been based on a set of official documents emanating from the EU institutions regarding migration issues as part of the Euro-Mediterranean relations. I assume that the declarations at the European level (issued either by the foreign ministers at the Euro-Mediterranean level, the Commission, the JHA Council or the European Council) result from the interaction between the variety of actors cited previously – among them fear entrepreneurs and desecuritizing actors. In order to shed light on the *shift* in the EU orientation towards immigration vis-à-vis the Mediterranean neighbours, I provide illustrations taken at three different time periods: the launching of the Barcelona Process in 1995, the initiative of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2004, and the latest policy developments at the EU level following the Arab Spring in 2011. For each of these periods, I organize the discourse analysis around three analytical steps:

<u>Schema</u>

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (1) Securitization process – indicators (discourse and practices) | (2) Emergence of fear through a cognitive process | (3) Resulting policy – emotional practices |

First, I look for indicators that a securitization process is set in motion (How are migration issues presented and articulated? What linkages are made between migration issues and other fields of cooperation? To what extent is migration presented as threatening or beneficial? What degree of importance is associated with migration issues?). Then, assuming that securitization processes trigger the emotion of fear, migration issues enter the realm of emotions; this is evident from expressions related to a greater sense of vulnerability. Once the securitization process has been identified, and the ensuing emotion of fear revealed, we turn to the fearful emotional practices reflecting the behaviour of an actor under the grip of fear.

Conversely, if no securitization process is set in motion, no emotion of fear arises and therefore one expects the absence of emotional practices in the sense of closure, and instead a tendency to adopt normative prescriptions.

## The Barcelona Process (1995): When Normative Power Europe was Fearless and Migration a Minor Issue

*The vision of the Barcelona Process and its region-building rationale*

Launched in Barcelona in November 1995, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) forged a "partnership" between the then fifteen EU member states and twelve Mediterranean partner countries (MPCs) across a comprehensive range of economic, political, social, cultural and security issues. The EMP's design follows the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which was created as the institutional part of the 1975 Helsinki Model, facilitating the "conciliation between East and West regarding issues of security, economic cooperation and humanitarian issues" (Pardo & Zemer 2005: 42). In a similar way, the EMP is constructed around three different areas of cooperation: the political and security partnership, establishing a common area of peace and stability; the economic and financial partnership, creating an area of shared prosperity; and the partnership in social, cultural and human affairs, which involves developing human resources, promoting understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies (Barcelona Declaration 1995). It is essential to note that the Barcelona Process was framed in a language of "shared values" and the vision of the eventual development of a secure, stable and peaceful Euro-Mediterranean space. Indeed, at the core of the EMP lay a *clear logic of region-building* aimed at achieving security through normative, spill-over and functionalist effects from the "inside of the EU" to the "outside of its borders" (Laursen 2003). According to the vision, stability and security in the region were to be achieved through the gradual dismantling of the political and socioeconomic causes of instability in the Southern Mediterranean countries themselves. Concretely, conditionality clauses were inserted into the Euro-Med association agreements and the MEDA regulation, linking economic and financial cooperation with the MPCs to institutional reforms, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights (Jünnemann 2004: 6). The conceptual rationale of the partnership approach is that the EU is an inherently civilian power that does not seek to impose its principles but rather to persuade and attract its neighbours. Hence the EMP's special value emanated from its normative dimension in line with its ambition to foster an ethical foreign policy and to be a "force for

good" in the world and in its Mediterranean backyard (Smith 2002).

*Absence of securitization processes, no fearful emotions involved: Dominance of normative prescriptions*

The in-depth discourse analysis of migration issues within the Barcelona Declaration reveals that migration was neither a high priority nor a security issue. As mentioned in the theoretical part of the paper, in the absence of a securitization process and constructed fear, a normative-driven behaviour is more likely to prevail as far as migration issues are concerned. A fearless actor is indeed more inclined to "take risks", and thus policy prescriptions for the long-term related to the development of the countries of origin may well be the preferred path. In this respect, the use of the normative toolbox to tackle migration is perceived to be more "risky" since it might not yield immediate results in limiting migration to the EU. The impact of development on migration choices remains under-researched; development may only reduce migration pressures in the longer term because of the "migration hump" (Boswell 2003: 636). On the other hand, the notion of risk does not only imply a possible loss or harm; it also provides the opportunity for major achievement. In this case, that would entail stemming migration flows by expanding opportunities and improving standards of living for potential migrants in accordance with the normative vocation of the EU.

This point is perfectly illustrated in the discourse analysis of the Barcelona Declaration. Indeed, even though the issue of migration was not extensively developed, one can point to the normative context within which it was embedded: the primary aim of the future cooperation was the "reduction of migratory pressures, among other things through vocational training programmes and programmes of assistance for job creation", indicating a strong commitment to address the root causes of migration. The basic orientation of the "normative root-cause approach" is not to restrain the movement of people but to construct an alternative through political innovation. Its rationale is that one must seek to influence, while also reducing, the push factors motivating people to leave their home countries (Aubarell et al. 2009: 12-13). This vocation clearly accorded with the wider logic of region-building: development assistance, trade and foreign direct investments were supposed to improve the growth prospects in the Maghreb countries, contribute to job creation and in turn substantially limit the number of potential migrants to Europe. In short, the linkage between migration and co-development within the framework of regional integration was dominant, and the measures adopted suited this approach. It is important to recall that, while the normative toolbox used by the EU for the Mediterranean partner countries carries risks, at that time the EU was

confident in the future and ready to engage in this endeavour.

This normative commitment, focused on the linkages between factors encouraging migration, policies of joint development and human exchanges, largely continued to prevail over the subsequent years. That may be because the social actors participating in the high-level meetings were mainly migration experts and economists who saw migration issues mainly in the context of development (The Hagues 1999). These social agents do not qualify as fear entrepreneurs – in contrast to security experts and policemen who subsequently gained in institutional importance, challenging the economic/development-oriented interpretation of the issue at stake.

## The European Neighbourhood Policy (2004): When Fear Creeps into the EU and Migration Becomes a Top Priority in Euro-Mediterranean Relations

*The ENP: The institutionalization of the external dimension of JHA in the ENP*

In 2004, the European Union launched its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with a view to living up to its image as a "force for good" in dealing with neighbouring countries while tackling common security issues. The European Security Strategy of 2003 had aspired to create "a world seen as offering justice and opportunity for everyone" and affirmed the intention of the EU to work proactively towards this end (European Council 2003). At first glance, the ENP appears to uphold this ambition to be a positive force in international relations rather well. The 2004 ENP strategy paper asserts that the EU seeks to promote "stability, security and well-being for all" by the use of incentives ("carrots") instead of sanctions ("sticks") and to foster cooperation in areas of mutual consent and interest (European Commission 2004). One of the most important changes was the institutionalization of the external dimension of JHA through the ENP action plans. In 2005, a European Commission Communication sought to demonstrate how the external dimension of justice and home affairs contributes to the establishment of the internal area of freedom, security and justice and at the same time supports the political objectives of the EU's external relations, including sharing and promoting these core values in third countries. Societies based on "good governance, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights", the Commission argues, "will be more effective in preventing domestic threats to their own security as well as more able and willing to cooperate against common international threats" (Collinson 2007). Thus the argument frequently heard from EU officials is that not only the Union but also the

ENP partners stand to benefit directly from cooperating on justice and home affairs issues, including of course the regulation of migration flows (Barbé & Johansson-Nogués 2008: 16).

In most of the action plans signed between the EU and the partner countries, measures are contemplated in three broadly grouped areas of action. First, the EU aims at improving ENP partners' migration management by offering technical and financial assistance to enhance document security and increase border control capacity (customs and border surveillance) (The Hague 2004). Second, the EU pledges to support ENP partner reforms in pursuit of judicial independence, police training and the reduction of corruption in their countries (Dublin 2004). Finally, ENP documents contemplate liberalizing the Schengen visa regime and facilitating travel to the EU from neighbouring countries (Barbé & Johansson-Nogués 2008: 86). Yet the level of commitment regarding this specific issue is very low: "the EU *may* consider visa facilitation" (COM (2004) 373) [emphasis added], and as we shall see, the possibility of legal migration to the EU will be used as a "carrot" in its relations with the Mediterranean partner countries. The measures listed in the action plans were supposed to represent, according to the External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, "a comprehensive and balanced approach, managing legal immigration while preventing and fighting illegal immigration, smuggling and trafficking in human beings" (Ferrero-Waldner 2006). Yet a critical analysis of the declarations and ensuing practices reveals a rather substantial tension between the "positive normative force" the EU wishes to embody and the control-oriented migration regime applied on the ground.

*Indicators of securitization and fear in the framework of the ENP*

The European Neighbourhood Policy, which was supposed to enhance the EMP, set aside the normative concerns about development and integration issues with regard to migration and favoured a much more security and control-oriented policy. Compared to the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, the ENP action plans have clearly prioritized and securitized migration issues. Indeed, questions of "illegal immigration" have been repeatedly defined as of "key importance" or "key issues" (Hague 2004) and increasingly associated with transnational threats. For instance, "illegal immigration" was cited among the "threats to mutual security" along with "environmental nuclear hazards, communicable diseases, human trafficking, organized crime, or terrorist networks" (COM (2003) 104). The fact that illegal migration is repeatedly cited in the same continuity as terrorism clearly establishes a link between the two phenomena. Even when it is a question of facilitating legal migration, the linkage is

automatically made with the possibility of a security threat posed by potential migrants: "The EU is currently looking at ways of facilitating the crossing of external borders for bona fide third-country nationals living in the border areas that have legitimate and valid grounds for regularly crossing the border and do not pose any security threat" (COM (2003) 104). Although no distinct indicators of fear were found in these documents, they are arguably encapsulated in the securitization markers.

*Fearful emotional practices*

As was assumed in the theoretical part, language has both the capacity to integrate events into a wider network of meanings and to mobilize certain emotions, expectations and reactions to an event. With the launching of the ENP, illegal migration has increasingly been associated with a dangerous threat. Hence, the most significant policy developments in the realm of migration issues in the Mediterranean Basin have largely corresponded to negative emotional practices: under the grip of fear, the actor under consideration will privilege the short term over the long term, and will seek to neutralize the threat by keeping the danger away or by removing physically the threat.

- Short-term over long-term preference: Focus on illegal migration and border management

In the midst of this securitization process, the European Union noted that "if carefully managed, migration can be a positive factor for the socioeconomic growth of the whole region" and that "migration is linked to the social, cultural and political integration of migrants". Therefore, "promoting the successful integration of migrants in any country is necessary but requires time and understanding" (Dublin 2004). The normative commitment of the EU has never disappeared. Yet, in accordance with our assumption of the "fearful actor", the problems that warrant long-term investment (integration/development) have been sidelined to the advantage of the most urgent priorities, which are clearly the "fight against illegal migration" and "enhanced border management". Interestingly, it seems that from the onset, the European Union had itself envisioned that "border management was likely to be the priority in most Action plans"; indeed, the emphasis has always been put first on the need to reinforce cooperation on this specific issue with the aim of "facilitating *legitimate* movements" (COM (2004) 373; Dublin 2004). Yet, as the Commission noticed two years later, "although cooperation with ENP countries on mobility and migration management is growing, the ENP has not yet allowed significant progress on improving the movement of partner country citizens to the EU" (COM (2006) 726), taking into account the EU's

reluctance to encourage legal migration from the Southern Mediterranean.

- To keep the danger (migrants) away through the "externalization" of migration control

The external dimension of JHA aims to enhance regional security by strengthening the resources and abilities of third countries to act in the security domain. In this respect, the main focus has been on the *repression* of undesired inflows of migrants through *externalization* (Lavanex 2006). The "remote control" approach, which the EU has favoured, involves a form of cooperation that essentially externalizes traditional tools of EU migration control to sending or transit countries outside the EU. The logic is to engage these sending and transit states in strengthening border controls, and combating illegal entry, migrant smuggling and trafficking in their own countries. The aim is basically to police the external border at a distance in order to control unwanted migration and to ensure that the pool of prospective migrants to Europe can be shifted and sorted before their arrival in the territory of receiving countries. Another premise of the remote-control approach is that it is much more difficult to expel unwanted migrants once they have arrived in European territory because of the legal protection they enjoy (Giraudon 2003). This remote-control approach is composed of several elements.

First, it consists of a capacity-building strategy in certain sending and transit countries, which mainly involves the transfer of know-how, surveillance technologies and facilities in order to improve the management and control of borders. In this remote-control approach, it is no longer a question of professional-training aid programmes and development of employment creation in the Southern Mediterranean countries at it was in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Instead, it seems the European Union is promoting the use of instruments of securitization, defined in the theoretical part of this paper as a "technical 'dispositif' or device embodying a specific threat image through which public opinion is configured in order to address a security issue" (Balzacq 2008: 79). At the first stage, the ENP strategy paper called for "the creation and training of corps of professional non-military border guards" (COM (2004) 373). However, over the years the European countries have been stepping up their efforts to police the Mediterranean borders, involving an increasing *militarization* of migration control in the sense of deploying semi-military and military forces and hardware to prevent migration by sea (Lütterbeck 2006). This securitarian trend can be mainly interpreted as the result of fruitful cooperation between fear entrepreneurs such as police units, criminal experts and FRONTEX. Moreover, the fact that migration controls were used at the same time as antiterrorism instruments reinforced the structure of shared meaning

according to which migrants and even third-country nationals are potential terrorists (Guild 2003).

The second element of the remote-control approach is the remote-protection strategy, which emphasizes the extraterritorial dimension of refugee protection (Aubarell et al. 2009: 14). By training transit and sending countries to treat asylum demands according to international law, the EU relieves itself of examining the potential candidates wishing to seek asylum in the EU. The policy of "externalization" of migration control has therefore fostered a shift of focus from development and collaboration on the issues of legal migration and human rights to the concern about securing external borders (Doukoure & Oger 2007).

- "Take them back": Readmission agreements in exchange for legal migration

The ENP action plans also include measures to ensure that if individuals do manage to enter the EU, they will be repatriated or removed to "safe third countries". A series of provisions for facilitating the return of asylum seekers and illegal migrants to third countries was introduced along with issues of legal migration. In this respect, legal migration is clearly dangled as a "carrot". Indeed, the EU visa-facilitation agreement is negotiated conditional upon the signing of a readmission agreement, clearly reflecting the Union's interest (COM (2004) 373). In 2006, two years after the launching of the ENP, the Commission called for a "a very serious examination of how visa procedures can be made less of an obstacle to legitimate travel from neighbouring countries to the EU (and vice versa) but insisted that "this can only be addressed in the context of broader packages to address related issues such as cooperation on illegal immigration, in particular by sea, combating trafficking and smuggling in human beings, efficient border management, readmissions agreements and effective return of illegal migrants, and adequate processing of requests for international protection and asylum" (COM (2006) 726). The readmission accord has a dual function, so that the ENP partner commits itself to taking back not only those of its nationals who find themselves in an unregulated situation within EU territory, but also all transiting persons originating in countries with which the EU does not have a readmission agreement (Barbé & Johansson-Noguès 2008: 90). The asymmetrical terms of the agreement betray the unwillingness of the European Union to encourage legal migration to its territory and, more importantly, its departure from a "comprehensive approach" that took into account the possibly detrimental consequences of the migration policy on the economic situation of the southern countries. Indeed, the partner countries are very hesitant to sign the readmission agreements because a substantial part of their national incomes depend on remittances from citizens who have

settled within the EU-27.[2] In the case of Morocco, these remittances would be considerably reduced if the substantial number of Moroccan citizens without residency permits living and working in EU countries today were returned to their country of origin as a consequence of the agreement. The second Moroccan fear concerns the obligation to assume responsibility for undocumented migrants from third countries who have passed through Morocco on their way to the EU, once they have been expelled from EU territory. For Morocco and the other Southern Mediterranean states, this would obviously create a major burden because in recent years, the MENA countries have themselves become transit countries for migrants coming mainly from sub-Saharan Africa and from Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and even China (Cuschieri 2007: 8). It seems then that the Southern Mediterranean countries are co-opted into the role of "gate-keepers", "buffer states" or even "gendarmes of Europe" in exchange for visa facilitation to the EU.

Last but not least, the new "keep the migrants out" approach has also led to indirect violations of human rights as the management of migration towards the EU is increasingly being externalized towards countries with poor human rights records and inadequate refugee protection, jeopardizing both the rights and the security of migrants. It seems indeed that the EU is ready to turn a partial blind eye towards human rights issues when migration is at stake. The idea behind the ENP of turning the migration issues into a "shared responsibility" with third countries via the readmission agreements seems quite outrageous given the fact that not one of the Mediterranean countries qualifies for the "safe country" status as defined by the EU (Cassarino 2005). Indeed, many of these countries have an appalling human rights record and no functioning systems of refugee protection (Roig & Huddleston 2007).

To sum up, the declared aim of the external dimension of JHA in the ENP to vigorously promote and export core EU values to third countries has been totally overshadowed by security concerns. This trend tarnishes the EU's image as a normative power all the more when one recalls Romano Prodi's (2002) assertion that the ENP is designed "to extend to this neighbouring region a set of principles, values and standards *which define the very essence of the European Union*" [emphasis added].

[2] One source puts the total official transfers from the expatriate community to Morocco in 2006 at more than €3.8 billion: close to 9 percent of GDP and the primary source of foreign exchange for the state's finances. See Khachani (2007).

## Migration in Light of the Arab Spring (2011): When Fear has been Institutionalized and the EU Shuts itself Off

*The Arab Spring and its impact on migration flows towards the European Union*

The crisis of the Arab Spring may emerge as another breaking point in the history of the European migration policy. Indeed, the popular uprisings in the Maghreb countries subverted the precarious balance of relations with authoritarian leaders on which the Euro-Mediterranean migration regime has been built over the years. The longstanding practice of delocalizing the border to the southern shores thus seemed to be at risk. The emotions have been particularly visible on both rims of the Mediterranean: hope and anger in the South versus fear in the North. Aware of the Europeans' high sensitivity regarding migration issues, Muammar Gaddafi threatened to turn Europe "black" by ceasing to contain migrants from Africa in case of a military attack (Hewitt 2011). However, such worst-case scenarios have never materialized. Only 3 percent of the people fleeing from Libya and Tunisia (corresponding to 25,000 persons) reached the shores of the European Union – dispelling the myth of a "biblical invasion"[3] as the Italian minister for home affairs, Roberto Maroni, dramatically described it. This quantity is insignificant compared to, for instance, the total number of entries by non-EU nationals across the common EU external borders through airports and other borders. According to data gathered by the Council of the European Union (2009), in *one week's time* the total number of entries (external border crossings) through the EU external borders is, on average, 1,955,178.

Put to the test, the EU's responses to the Arab Spring in terms of mobility and migration have been multifaceted. The first reaction was to provide immediate humanitarian support to third countries dealing with hundreds of thousands of people moving across the Mediterranean region and more particularly fleeing Libyan political unrest. The second reaction was to publish a series of communications on "migration" all outlining the need to develop new partnerships with countries of the southern neighbourhood in the field of migration. Last but not least, the third response was to aim for the modification of Schengen rules in order to allow member states to reintroduce internal border checks in cases where a partner faces a massive influx of migrants at its external borders, thereby putting the entire "Schengen edifice" under great strain.

[3] See Roberto Maroni, Italian Minister for Home Affairs, quoted in *Corriere della Sera*, 14 February 2011.

*Indicators of securitization and fear*

A discourse analysis of the relevant EU documents clearly reveals the markers of an acute securitization process. Again, traditional and erroneous linkages between migration and security emerge several times. For instance, the Commission underlines that "EUROPOL has deployed a team of experts in Italy, to help its law enforcement authorities to identify *possible criminals among the irregular migrants* having reached the Italian territory", linking migration inevitably with criminality. The flawed perception of a trade-off between enhanced mobility and security risks is made clear by recurrent expressions, such as: "the EU should ensure that the need for enhanced mobility does not undermine the security of the Union's external borders" (COM (2011) 248), as if accepting more migrants inevitably entails a form of danger or at least a security risk. In addition, one can discern the discursive move using numbers or alarmist estimations to cause panic. Indeed, the magnitude of the migratory pressure towards the EU is greatly amplified. It is a question of "*massive* flows of illegal migrants and to a *limited extent*, of persons in need of international protection", of "*critical* migratory pressure", and of "*thousands of people* that have recently sought to come to the EU, putting the protection and reception systems of some of our Member states under increasing strain" (COM (2011) 248). The vague numbers of "thousands of people" or "several hundred thousands of people trafficked into the EU or within the EU each year" convey the impression of an uncontrollable flood. It is important to note that this assessment is mainly based on FRONTEX's risk analysis – previously defined as a fear entrepreneur that exaggerates the real magnitude of the phenomenon. In the wake of the Arab Spring, FRONTEX assessed that up to 500,000 migrants were ready to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe. At the end of the day, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 28,000 illegal migrants from Tunisia and Libya arrived in Europe while 600,000 persons fled the violence in Libya to Tunisia and Egypt (Express 2011). This propensity to over-perceive and overestimate the likelihood of negative events (in this case the invasion of Europe by migrants) is reminiscent of the behaviour of an actor under the grip of fear.

To back this theoretical claim, suffice it to say that the official documents, and in particular the European Commission's Communication of 4 May 2011, are replete with emotional indicators dealing with migration issues. Specific indicators of fear can be found throughout the text, betraying a sense of vulnerability and weakness stemming from the unexpected migratory crisis. The acute securitization process described above occurs in a very emotion-laden context. For instance, terms such as "a period of *profound uncertainty*", "the *vulnerability*, the *weaknesses* of certain sections of the EU's external border", or the report

that "the magnitude of the problem *exceeds* the existing facilities of the most exposed Member states" reveal an emotional background characterized by a lack of control over the events, and hence of fear (COM (2011) 248) [emphasis added] – or, "a big concern is caused by the possible increase of flows of persons" (COM (2011) 292). Among the reasons for the need to strengthen the EU's external borders, the Commission argues that "citizens need *to feel reassured* that external border controls are working properly" (COM (2011) 248). This emotional vocabulary bolsters the thesis of the fearful actor or, alternatively, of the security experts/politicians' desire to show that they are managing the situation and can cope with the danger.

*Exacerbated fearful practices: "Closure reflex"*

Against this emotional background characterized by an acute perception of threat, a low sense of control and uncertainty, fearful exclusionary practices were more likely to prevail. The economic and financial crisis that hit Europe has further fuelled this pessimistic emotional mood: "Over recent months, Europe has gone through a serious financial crisis. Although economic recovery in Europe is now on track, risks remain…." (EUCO 10/1/11). Consequently, the commonly accepted restrictive policy paradigm towards migrants from the Southern Mediterranean countries took the lead. Similar to a kind of "closure reflex", all the emotional practices that had been put in place in the previous years were reinforced, emphasizing once again "short-term thinking", the main characteristic of the EU migration policy in recent years. This includes applying the remote-control approach aimed at reinforcing cooperation on border management with third countries (EUCO 7/11) and at promoting the extraterritorial dimension of refugee protection through the proposal of a Regional Protection Programme (RPP) (COM (2011) 292). Likewise, in order to stop the migrants on their way to Europe, the surveillance and control of the external borders have been bolstered with upgraded instruments of securitization: as a "matter of priority", the external borders of the EU must become "smart borders" equipped with new technologies (EUCO 23/11), the competences of FRONTEX must be rapidly strengthened (COM (2011) 292) and the "feasibility of creating a European System of border guards should be considered" (COM (2011) 248). Last but not least, the fearful emotional practice applied through the readmission agreement and consisting of "sending the migrants back" was further implemented: "The European Union will consult with the countries of the region concerned to improve measures to facilitate the return of migrants to their countries of origin" (EUCO 7/11). Lavenex (2001: 30) explains that originally, readmission agreements aimed at the

facilitated expulsion of illegal immigrants and rejected asylum seekers after examination of their claims. Today, these agreements are increasingly being used as a legal basis for the return of asylum seekers before status determination on the basis of the safe third-country rule.

*The EU's awareness of the over-emotionality surrounding migration issues: Long-term measures, development concern and mobility partnerships*

The exacerbated fearful practices detailed above bluntly contradict the original vision of the EMP's and the European Union's own declared tenets of inclusiveness. Yet, interestingly, it seems that the EU has become aware of the emotional dynamics at play regarding migration issues and now urges returning to a more "rational" and "balanced" migration policy (COM (2011) 248). This trend had begun at the European level in 2005 with the launching of the Global Approach to Migration. More notably, in 2006, Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner, the European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, underlined that "migration is too often presented in simplistic, sensational terms, which do no justice to the complex factors behind it.… In uncertain times, when the forces of globalisation seem to be sweeping all in their path, it is understandable that our citizens are worried about employment and increased competition for jobs. But the prevailing view of migration is, unfortunately, based more on emotion than on fact". In the same vein and more recently, the Commission called for "a rational migration policy that would recognise that migrants can bring economic dynamism and new ideas and help create new jobs. Migrants also help fill gaps in the labour market that EU workers cannot, or do not wish to fill, and contribute to addressing the demographic challenges that the EU faces" (COM (2011) 248).

In the framework of the new approach to the evolving Mediterranean neighbourhood, an opportunity was given to take stock of the previous policies in the field of migration. In this respect, the EU clearly acknowledged that short-term measures focused mainly on border management were not sufficient and thus reiterated its commitment to the long-term development of the Mediterranean region (COM (2011) 248; COM (2011) 292). In May 2011, the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policies presented a renewed European Neighbourhood Policy and a package of concrete proposals concerning the EU's approach in the area of migration, mobility and security with the Southern Mediterranean countries. Stemming from the understanding that a rational migration policy entails more channels for legal migration, the main novelty was the introduction of "mobility partnerships" as the cornerstone of the new dialogue between the

EU and the partner countries. These promising partnerships are supposed "to bring together all the measures, which ensure that mobility is mutually beneficial. They provide for better access to legal migration channels and strengthened capacities for border management and handling irregular migration. They can include initiatives to assist partner countries to establish or improve labour migration management, including recruitment, vocational and language training, development and recognition of skills, and return and reintegration of migrants" (COM (2011) 292/3). However, it remains uncertain whether this ambitious framework proposed by the Commission will achieve its objectives. Indeed, when one attentively examines the text, it fails to fully convince. It may replicate former fallacies, hence raising questions about its capacity to bring added value. Clearly, no substantial policy change has been introduced. The increased mobility via visa facilitation is again branded as a "carrot" by the EU, and is made conditional upon the prior fulfilment of certain measures with the partner country, including among others: voluntary-return arrangements, the conclusion of readmission agreements and working arrangements with FRONTEX, and cooperation in the joint surveillance of the Mediterranean (COM (2011) 292/3). All these preconditions to legal migration facilities exactly correspond to the practices of externalization put in place in the framework of the ENP, calling into question the characterization as a "*renewed* European Neighbourhood Policy".

In sum, this analysis indicates that the control-oriented approach is likely to remain the predominant pattern of cooperation regarding migration issues. This could be explained by the fact that the emotional practices resulting from the socially constructed fear at the EU level have been deeply institutionalized.

*Fortress Europe shaken from within: Creating an additional border-layer at the heart of the Schengen space*

Even if the Schengen crisis is an internal European issue and as such is not directly linked to the relations with the Mediterranean countries, the European reaction is worth underlining since it is very telling with regard to fearful actors. Indeed, the fear of an "uncontrolled flow of migrants flooding the EU" was so significant that a number of member states called for reconsidering the Schengen Agreement, triggering a major institutional debate over one of the basic European rights: free movement. The perceived threat of extensive waves of immigration from the southern shores led the European Council to call for the "introduction of a mechanism that would respond to exceptional circumstances putting the overall Schengen cooperation at risk, without jeopardising the free movement of persons". It went as far as to

state that “as a very last resort, a safeguard clause could be introduced to allow the exceptional reintroduction of internal border controls in a truly critical situation where a member state is no longer able to comply with all its obligations under the Schengen rules” (EUCO 23/11). Even though this prerogative is presented as “a measure of last resort”, it essentially introduces a new form of border management, with a mobile external frontier that can move back and forth as circumstances require. Indeed, some member states, especially the southern and eastern ones, are formally regarded as weak links in external border control, and this prerogative would enable fashioning these states into a proper buffer zone lying partly outside the Schengen system. It now appears that the southern European countries have replaced the northern Mediterranean ones in providing the first line of defence for the safe area of freedom, security and justice of “core” European countries (Campesi 2011: 16). The very possibility of modifying the *acquis* of Schengen, which is one of the most impressive fulfilments of the European integration, testifies to the importance that migration issues have assumed and more particularly to the sense of danger, or negative perception associated with migration in the European Union.

## Alternative Explanations and their Deficiencies

Apart from the emotional explanation developed in this paper, how can one alternatively explain the trend towards a more control-oriented approach to migration at the EU level?

### Classic Realist Explanation: On the Link between National Interest and Migration

In a nutshell, the basic assumption of political realism is that states are unitary rational actors whose behaviour is constrained by the anarchic structure of the international system. States are therefore caught in a security dilemma, forced to be ever attentive to the protection of their sovereignty and searching for ways to enhance their power and capabilities. According to Morgenthau (1973), the acquisition and use of power is the primary national interest of the nation-state. His thesis, however, has been attacked, and today most realists recognize that states are not simply motivated by considerations of the balance of relative power capabilities. They also pursue distinctive normative or ideological agendas, which might include spreading religion or furthering a particular political cause (Mearsheimer 2005). However, in practice most states have proved "rational" in the sense that they are keenly aware of the structural distribution of power in the international system and do not pursue their normative agenda at the expense of their vital national interests (Hyde-Price 2008: 31). From this theoretical starting point, Hollifield (2000: 154) derives two simple hypotheses with regard to migration: (1) migration or refugee policy is a matter of national security, and states will open their borders when it is in their national interest to do so (i.e. when it will enhance their power and position in the international system); (2) migration policy is a function of international systemic factors, namely the distribution of power in the international system and the relative positions of states. The notion of national interest has been extensively developed by Neuchterlein (1979). Two aspects of the national interest, however, are of primary importance to the realist school: defence interest, the "survival of the state" (i.e. the protection of the nation-state and its citizens from the threat of physical violence by another country, and/or protection from an externally inspired threat to the national political system); and economic interest (i.e. the enhancement of the nation-state's economic wellbeing in relations with other states). For the realist school of thought, a country's population is arguably one of its most important resources provided it is properly mobilized. Purely on the level of basic demographics, migration can indeed make a difference to a state's power.

Applied to the present case study, one could explain the evolution of the EU migration

policy by stressing that in the different European states, migration issues remain primarily viewed in terms of national interest relating either to the maintenance of social cohesion or to the burden migration might constitute for the European labour market (Guiraudon 2000: 193). This trend is all the more discernible in times of severe financial and economic crisis, and the Madrid and London terrorist bombings have given a further impetus to restrict immigration to the EU on national security grounds. The terrorist threat was perceived as justifying more draconian migration-control measures, stricter asylum procedures and extended surveillance of potential migrants through EU-wide databases (Mitsilegas 2007). With this in mind, one can easily understand the rationale behind the control-oriented approach to migration in the Euro-Med relations. If the European states' national interest indeed resides in limiting migration because it constitutes a serious security threat and an excessive economic burden, normative considerations are naturally sidelined in favour of defending more vital national interests by altering the foreign policy towards the Mediterranean.

Having presented the premises of the realist school with regard to migration, a few critical points should be raised. First of all, the realist school falls short of explaining the variation in the definition of migration as a security threat, or of the curbing of migration as a national interest. Indeed, migration flows to the European countries are far from being a new phenomenon. In the 1950s and 1960s, encouraging labour migration was clearly in the national interest of most of the European countries. Interestingly, during the 1990s and more particularly after the 9/11 terror attacks, migration was progressively re-conceptualized as posing a security threat to receiving countries. This redefinition of migration as a security matter cannot be properly explained by the realist school, which exclusively considers "hard security" threats in terms of military capabilities. In this regard, the constructivist approach is of added value since it takes into account changes in shared meaning, maintaining that the very notions of "national interest" or of "migration as a security threat" are socially constructed. In the words of Katzenstein (1996), "interests do not need to be rationally 'discovered' but are rather constructed through a process of social interaction".

As to the economic argument, the reluctance of the member states and the EU to promote more channels for legal migration does not correspond to the realist logic of power maximization: in-depth economic studies emphasize the structural need for migration to sustain the EU's economic level. The economic argument, according to which migrants are detrimental to the economies of the European countries, should be revised or at least debated. Indeed, the risk of excessive pressure on social-protection schemes and of increased competition in the labour market and wage dumping tends to conceal the positive

contributions of migrations to the economic and demographic levels (Bowell & Geddes 2011: 82-83). Today many advanced European countries have aging populations and need younger workers if their social security systems are to function and if they are to compete on the world market (Adamson 2006; Hollifield 2000). As mentioned, the EU itself is well aware of the need for better management of migration to sustain its economic level. Against this claim, some might argue that given the global financial downturn that has hit Europe since 2008, a more restrictive migration policy is fully understandable on realist grounds. That notion, however, needs some nuance. First, according to the OECD, the world financial crisis has led to a sharp cut in migration to Europe. The West's leading economic think tank even warned governments it was wrong to claim that migration, both legal and illegal, was "out of control". John Martin, the OECD director for employment, labour and social affairs, explains that "as economies began to recover, the effect of ageing populations and workforces is likely to mean the demand for migrant workers would begin to increase again. But societies would only be ready for this if governments took responsibility for telling their voters the truth about immigration and its positive benefits" (*The Guardian* 2011). Second, greater economic vulnerability at the European level neither contradicts nor weakens the thesis of the social construction of fear and its impact on the EU foreign policy towards migrants from the Mediterranean. Indeed, economic difficulties cannot erase the shared understanding that has formed over time about the migrants; on the contrary, they may contribute to a greater sense of vulnerability and hence further intensify the fear of migrants.

## Institutional Explanation: Blurring of Internal and External Security

The shift in the migration policy from the normative to the security-oriented approach can be explained by the incremental institutionalization of migration issues at the European level. In the context of the *communitarization* of asylum and migration issues, the so-called external dimension of migration policy has particularly blurred the internal and external security distinction, the "implication being that the location of responsibility for migration with national and EU political systems became more complex" (Geddes 2009: 23). Wallace (2000) views migration and asylum as a form of "intensive transgovernmentalism", which is distinct from intergovernmental (state cooperation) or supranational (EU-driven) policy types. According to this account, complex institutional dynamics emerge and are characterized by the intensive cooperation of specific groups of ministers and officials.

Since the late 1980s and even more so at the turn of the 21st century, the interior ministers and other security-related actors (in the framework of JHA cooperation) have gained more

power in the migration field, influencing the EU policy towards third countries on this issue according to their own understanding of the situation, preferences and interests. For instance, they imposed the idea that the externalization of border control, restrictive asylum systems, and cooperation to combat migrant smuggling and trafficking were the most effective instruments to fill the loopholes created by the elimination of borders within the Schengen area (Boswell 2003: 623). Being responsible for the protection of public order and the preservation of domestic stability, they were among the first actors to try and impose the EU model of internal security upon its neighbours when the external dimension of JHA was introduced. In my own analysis, I take into account the changing institutional setting, which brings new actors into the decision-making process on migration. But I complement this by pointing both to the securitization processes such actors may trigger and to the emotional factor at play in this dynamic that is too often neglected.

## Conclusion and Perspectives

The aim of this study was to further the debate about the role of emotions in international relations theory and more particularly to shed light on the emotional element at play in the EU migration policy towards its Mediterranean neighbours. In order to explain the puzzling policy shift from a normative-comprehensive approach to migration towards a more control-oriented one, I suggested that the *socially constructed* fear of migrants at the EU level led to the adoption of exclusionary emotional practices reflecting the behaviour of an actor under the grip of fear. This thesis has largely been confirmed throughout the study: the in-depth analysis of official EU documents revealed the causal mechanism linking processes of securitization to the emotion of fear, which in turn gave rise to a restrictive migration policy towards the Southern Mediterranean countries. This shift has worked to the detriment of longer-term strategies of development, refugee-protection concerns, and more constructive and beneficial patterns of cooperation with third countries. In accordance with our theoretical assumptions, the more securitization indicators appeared in the declarations, the more emotional exclusionary practices emerged thereby betraying the emotional element at play. Mainly through the externalization of control, readmission agreements and increased militarization of the southern borders, the EU clearly attempts to neutralize the threat (i.e. migrants) and keep the danger far away. Even when the EU tries to adopt a more inclusive approach, the same pattern of rejection persists, indicating that fear and securitizing practices have largely been institutionalized over time. In sum, as Sciortino (2005: 256) puts it, "Fortress Europe never really lifted its drawbridges".

It should be kept in mind that the metaphor of "Fortress Europe" or "Europe as a gated community" (Zaiotti 2007) symbolizes only the securitarian trend of EU migration policies. Hence it would be mistaken to caricature the EU as an emotional organization that could completely lose sight of its normative commitment to be a "force for good" in the world. In this respect, I tried to underline throughout the paper the EU's reiterated and deep-seated normative commitment to a comprehensive approach to migration as well as its efforts to promote better integration of the migrants already living in Europe. This ambivalence of the EU discourse regarding migration issues could constitute a future topic of research. By refocusing the analysis, one could examine more precisely the role played by each institution (both at the national and EU levels) to identify who the most securitizing actors are; could the Commission be considered an "emotional manager" in charge of counteracting the basic impulses of the member states? Furthermore, it would be interesting to delve into the complex

bilateral relationships between the EU member states and the Southern Mediterranean countries and to examine whether these interactions are compatible with the policies at the EU level.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study has underlined the role of emotions in EU foreign policy. This approach may initially have raised scepticism, since the European Union is more traditionally conceived as a complex multilayered organization, composed of rather neutral, cold-blooded technocrats and politicians. However, by pointing to the emotional indicators hidden in the official declarations, I demonstrated that emotions are at play even in the highest spheres of decision-making at the EU level and have a crucial impact on the resulting policy. The EU, with its multiple institutions and agencies, can be regarded as an emotional actor in at least three respects: first, as a *meaning producer*, playing an important role in the social construction of migrants as a security threat and in the unfolding creation of fear; second, by adopting specific policies clearly corresponding to the behaviour of a fearful actor; and third, by reinforcing the structure of shared meaning through these emotional practices in which migrants are negatively perceived. At the bottom line, the study has shown that indeed, emotions are part and parcel of the social relationships that develop at the international level between political entities. In that sense, they are a complement to the constructivist ontology that attributes great importance to structures of shared meanings in explaining international politics: meaning and emotion are intimately interlinked.

However, trying to reveal the presence and the specific impact of emotions at the EU level as a whole has proved to be a methodological challenge. Emotions are more easily detectable at the individual level of analysis; decision-makers can be interviewed in an informal context and poll results on threat perceptions can be analyzed. But despite the difficulty of the task, researchers should be well aware of the existence and influence of emotions in world politics. If emotions are indeed socially constructed, then we can understand and manipulate the forces that shape our perceptions and actions. In the case of migration, which has been the topic of my study, the very awareness of the emotional element at play should lead researchers and politicians to ponder possible and efficient “desecuritizing strategies”. Instead of “institutionalizing fear” and promoting “cultures of fear”, efforts should be made to reverse the trend and turn instead to dispassionate and well-informed debate that can elaborate better policies. This is all the more relevant as migration is expected to become a more and more acute issue in our globalized world.

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