



## **Institutionalisation as a Result of External Triggers? The Refugee Crisis and the EU's Externalisation of Integrated Border Management to Neighbouring Buffer States**

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### Abstract

Literature on European integration tends to focus on a gradual snowball effect, starting from the inception of the European Coal and Steel Community and internal processes that eventually lead to the European Union (EU) we know today. But place coal under immense amounts of heat and pressure, and you drastically alter its molecular structure. This is the perspective this thesis will seek to take. Rather than expounding on theories of spillover, it will seek to build on EU integration paradigms by considering exogenous factors that trigger internal structural alterations within the EU. Such studies are still in their infancy compared to International Relations (IR) theories and integration theories which highlight endogenous factors.

The thesis will focus specifically on one policy area – integrated border management (IBM) – and how the EU externalises internal border controls to neighbouring third countries to achieve its internal objectives (in this case, securitising its own territory). Hence, it will endeavour to answer two main questions: (1) How have the 2010 Arab Spring and 2015 refugee crisis as external threats influenced the integration of EU border management? (2) Have these external events accelerated or hindered the institutionalisation of EU border security and border assistance missions?

Libya and Turkey have been chosen as case studies due to their intriguing relations with the EU. While Libya is a partner under the European Neighbourhood Policy left with a power vacuum and increasingly porous borders following the ousting of Gaddafi, Turkey is a candidate country with prospects of joining the Schengen area. Although the domestic situations in both countries differ drastically from one another, both are of immense strategic importance to EU border management as transit countries. To what extent has the EU managed to integrate and externalise IBM to Libya and Turkey in order to stem the flow of irregular migrants to EU territory? This focus on external security threats will not seek to replace integration

theories such as neo-functional spillover, but to complement them as another possible catalysing effect.

Hence, the thesis will start with an overview of relevant IR and integration theories which can be applied to EU foreign policy. The methodology will be based on an analytical framework to measure the level of institutionalisation of EU external action using three main indicators: coherence, supranational competences and external effects. These three indicators will then be applied to a general overview of IBM development, followed by its externalisation to Turkey and Libya. Due to this focus on exogenous influences, an attempt will be made to 'decentralise' EU foreign policy by also considering the actorness of these third actors. They are not merely passive recipients, but have displayed an ability to structurally alter the EU from the outside, as the EU and its member states attempt to grapple with transboundary crises. Ultimately, the aim of this thesis is to contribute to integration literature with a focus on the role of external crises in EU integration – or indeed, to question whether full institutionalisation is needed at all.