# Arab Spring - Islamic Winter - North-African Exodus. An explanation of the political economy of Mediterranean long-run dynamics

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## Abstract

This paper sets out to explain the links between the upheavals in Arab states in spring 2011 and the current wave of immigration in Europe. As it turns out, an understanding of these dynamics involves not only the tightly interwoven net of economic and political motives and actions, it also is necessary to understand the working of ideological warfare (including religions) in a new age of information and communication technology. Thus there is the intermediate step of an 'Islamic Winter' between the 'Arab Spring' and the 'North-African Exodus'.

## Introduction

This chapter sets out to explain the recent dramatic events in the Mediterranean and European area in a broader context. To understand what currently manifests itself as the emergence of a political and military entity called Islamic State, why masses of refugees from the Middle-East and North Africa are heading to EU member states, how the future states on the Southern coast of the Mediterranean can be built to enable a peaceful cooperation with Europa, for all these burning questions a closer look at the long-run economic and political development since the end of World War 2 is necessary. To provide such a modest synopsis it is useful to start with the sequence of the three most recent 'surprises': The Arab Spring, the Islamic Winter, and the North African (and Arab) Exodus. From each of these lighthouse events a way towards the understanding of its roots back in history is presented. The *Arab Spring* evidently exploded an arrangement of state powers that had worked quite some time after WW2 – and which thus has to be examined first. The so-called *Islamic Winter* subsequently showed the fact that the ideological force of religious believes had been dramatically underestimated by Western social scientists. The roots of ideological manipulation in the respective areas thus have to be studied in greater detail. Finally, the great emigration, what I call *North-African exodus*, clearly has historical roots in the divergence between economic and political developments North and South of the Mediterranean. This should not have been a 'surprise', but rather is an unavoidable late consequence of the *Arab Spring* modified by the ideological distortions of the *Islamic Winter*. The war in Syria is only the most outstanding example of a dangerous mixture of geo-politically determined military potential and

ideological manipulation. Though this sequence of recent events that made it to Western mass media becomes clearer in retrospect, it has not been used to develop a feasible vision for a future economically and politically stable settling of power structures. A first attempt in this respect is provided in the conclusion.

**Arab Spring**

During the first months of 2011 European mass media spread the information that revolts in several Arab countries on the Southern shores of the Mediterranean were taking place. The totality of this phenomenon quickly was dubbed 'Arab Spring'. For the majority of European citizens this news came as a surprise[1]. One was used to learn from time to time that one of these regimes underwent a political or military turmoil eventually leading to a new power group on top of the state. But these events seemed to be country-specific and no general pattern except the alternating search for support from one of the global super powers (USA, SU, later Russia) could be found.

But in spring 2011 the adjective 'Arab' signaled that there was a new quality. There was a hidden reference to the whole geographic area historically dominated by Arabs, and implicitly also to the cultural background that always was perceived as being 'different' – somehow strange -  from the European one. For the more educated general public in Europe this perception of the Arab area then was supplemented by a more fine-grained picture of particular countries. Governance in these countries either was classified as outright feudal (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Morocco) or as being dominated by a military leader, often having gained power by a coup of parts of the national army (e.g. Colonel Gaddafi). Suddenly there was something else to be considered as a common element across all Arab countries: A revolting civil society consisting pre-dominantly of young and better educated people. At first sight – and from a Western perspective - this upheaval in the Arab world could easily be interpreted as a kind of belated bourgeois revolution. And this somewhat naïve view resulted in an overall positive attitude of Europeans with respect to the Arab Spring. It was naïve because it ignored some hard facts that enabled these upheavals in the first place. As a matter of fact, the simultaneity of the riots already points to some common reasons that explain the synchronous appearance of seemingly spontaneous revolts.

First, there were some technical devices (i.e. smartphones, internet, even TV sets) that had become an elementary channel, transmitter and organizer of group actions in the last two decades[2]. In 2011 feudal or pseudo-feudal control of a society had rapidly become an extremely difficult task. Stricter coercive power of police forces and ever more draconic punishment methods could compensate for the loss of terrain of state power due to these technological trends – but only for a limited time. These reactions in Arab governments before 2011 even fueled, motivated and radicalized the emerging insurgent groups. The ICT

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[1] The African countries on the Mediterranean littoral had were seen as being better off than other African countries, having already reached European standards of 1913, and were still growing (see [Maddison, 2007, pp.231-245]).

[2] Compare [Hänska-Ahy, 2014] for a description of the role of social media in the Arab Spring.

revolution and its deep impact on communication behavior certainly is a global phenomenon, the actual change brought about for social dynamics of the human species is still not well understood. The very specific influence of technical devices on the events during the Arab Spring can hardly be exaggerated.

Second, the generational change that had occurred in the masses of the populations in these countries – a change in age structure, in education structure, in cultural habits – is closely related to the new technological possibilities. The transmission of knowledge and of lifestyles[3] started to work even for lower income social strata, not to speak of those who could benefit from the revenues derived from crude oil exports. As a side effect it could be observed that the contradictions between large cities and the open country were amplified by the centripetal forces of technology and their influence on the movement of the young to these cities. Moreover, those Arab students that had studied abroad and returned mainly to the larger cities, where their (at least middle-income) families lived, were getting more and more. In 2011 the large cities in the Arab world became the hot-spots of the insurgency, and there is no doubt that it was this common generational characteristic that contributed to simultaneity.

Third, the global political economy played a decisive synchronizing role. It consisted of three main, partly interdependent, components: (1) the global economic crisis; (2) the fading support of Arab governments by Europe; (3) the shift of president Obama's military focus[4].

1. The global economic crisis that led to a shake-up of the world economy took off in September 2008. Its roots, of course, were already there when Lehman Brothers collapsed on September 15. This event only was the kick-off for an avalanche of consequences in financial markets, which made the incompatibility of the prevailing mode of exploitation and innovation with its global institutional setup visible. While transmission mechanisms in credit markets work extremely fast, the transfer of the reshuffling of contract conditions to the sphere of decisions concerning material production processes – the so-called 'real economy' – takes more time. In general, the big breakdown in GDP in OECD countries occurred in 2009. The greater the distance to this epicenter of the economic earthquake the longer the more time elapsed, e.g. the current decrease of the Chinese growth rate – eight years after 2008 - signals its relative independence of OECD developments. For Arab countries the global crisis had a lag of three years until it became one of the reasons for the Arab Spring, compare diagram 1. The arrival of the disastrous development in Europe can be precisely dated: In 2009 unemployment explodes and GDP as well as imports from non-EU countries fall sharply. This quickly reduces export possibilities (mainly crude oil exports of Arab countries) substantially. While EU imports then grow again at a rate comparable to the pre-crisis level, export growth of Arab countries only reaches half of the high rates

[3] The marked decrease in the average number of children per woman in most Arab countries (2-3 children instead of 5-7) was a result as well as a further stimulator for changing life styles.
[4] Compare also [Hanappi, 2015, pp. 141-174].

experienced in the past. Finally, growth of consumption per head in Arab countries has to follow the same disappointing pattern of exports. This synchronizing effect of the global crisis is further amplified by the obvious wealth and income inequality that becomes ever more dramatic as the upper class is much better equipped to fight crisis influences.
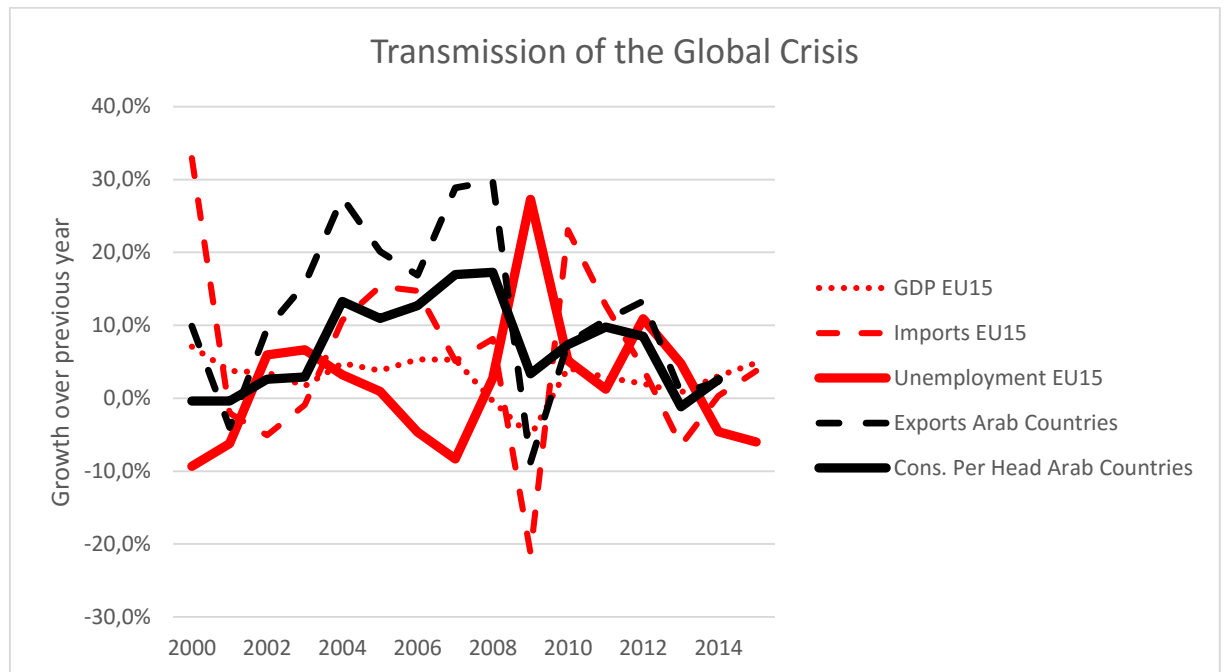


Diagram 1: Transmission of the global crisis
Sources: United Nations Economic Database, AMICO database Eurostat

2. Though European heads of state in 2009 were aware that the global crisis will shake-up their economies, they reacted rather slowly. It took quite some time until the most active European institution, the European Central Bank, intervened to overcome the worst of several misleading reactions (often summarized as 'austerity policy'), which were guided by special national interests of single EU members. In this turmoil a central continental mechanism of the stable European development gets out of sight: South and South-East of Europe the ensemble of nation states that had been installed by the victorious Allies in the aftermath of the war had been a remarkably unchanged pillar for European evolution[5]. The internal political stability of this ensemble was necessary because the steep fall of welfare levels between the northern and the southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea could only be secured with the help of more or less military regimes in the south. To make sure that the leaders in Arab countries are motivated to do their job, European governments had supported them – by specific trade agreements (often including weapons for crude oil) and usually further increasing wealth inequality. With the crisis the tensions between the partners on both

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[5] The map of countries in the Middle East was set up by the previous colonial powers – according to the famous Sykes-Picot plan – and survived till 2015, when Syria, Iraq, and Libya broke apart; compare [Fromkin, 1990].

sides of the Mediterranean increased rapidly. Governments and private firms in Europe had to save money and reduced trade support for regimes, which they could not justify from a democratic perspective anyway. Infuriated leaders (e.g. Gaddafi) and ruling cliques in the South overestimated their international standing as well as their local military dominance. What at this stage remained invisible for Europeans is the fact that eliminating strong military rule in North Africa and the Middle East will unleash economic, ethnic, and religious dynamics that are hard to predict, not to talk about control. The *commonly observed* disentanglement of leaders of Arab countries from their benevolent cooperators in Europe certainly encouraged all new political groups organizing the Arab Spring.

3. In autumn 2008 the new president of the USA decided to reduce military intervention of US troops in the Middle East rather fast and to turn his attention to the Pacific Basin. Governance of Iraq was left to local US-friendly rulers and for Afghanistan a similar complete withdrawal of US military was envisaged. Obviously domestic US policy also played an important role for this change of Middle East policy. The enduring traumatic experience of the defeat in Vietnam as well as the shallow feeling that George Bush's exaggerated and triumphant appraisal of the defeat of Iraq left for many US citizens, motivated Obama more than purely geo-political considerations. The change of US policy was broadly recognized in the Arab world. On the one hand it meant that the link to Israel, the closest ally of the US in the region, was loosened, which by many Arab leaders was seen as a positive sign. On the other hand, their own military support from 'the West' would suffer too – with the exception of Saudi Arabia, which quickly emphasized its role as the strong *Islamic* force that guarantees pro-Western stability in the region. US military support for the Saudi Kingdom remained high, no Arab Spring would have had the slightest chance there. But for several other Arab states the frustrating experiences the USA had had in the Middle East, which finally transpired into Obama's decision to 'bring the boys home' from the region, showed to potential rebel groups that outside intervention would not be a danger. As the events in Libya later showed, British and French air fighters would even intervene to support the rebels against the old regime. Of course, these actions too were hardly motivated by enthusiasm for a bourgeois revolution in the Arab world, but rather aimed to demonstrate the might of the respective air force.

In hindsight the short period of the Arab Spring can be said to have been surprisingly successful. Stable undemocratic leading cliques have been driven out of government, suddenly there seemed to be room for a new political start. But as a general rule to be learned from the subsequent events it turned out that getting rid of bad regime is a completely different task than to install a better regime.

**Islamic Winter**

In 1969 California experienced the so-called 'Summer of Love' that the generation of hippies proclaimed as the logical consequence of the Cultural Revolution, which the rebellious

beatniks of 1968 had started all over the world[6]. It lasted just one summer till it was slowly transformed into mainstream, economically used fashion gags. The Arab Spring did not even get a chance to transform itself into any kind of peaceful 'summer'; too many vested interests were involved, too many weapons were already present in the region. And above all, consistent blueprints how to govern a country given the existing population were rare, not to speak about the necessary coalitions needed to implement such solutions.

The most remarkable phenomenon certainly was the inverse relationship between ideological confusion and openness to extreme religious believe systems. The less a revolting group had the capacity to interpret what was going on, the easier it was for extremist religious leaders to fill the vacuum that emerged by not understanding the dynamics with the ideological dogma they offered. In particular, the extreme form of political Islam in these groups could operate on an ideological battlefield that that was cleaned from any pre-existing remainders of thoughts of the French 'rationality and enlightenment' or British 'down to earth economics'. The justified resentment concerning previous colonial powers had swept away all the more precious parts of Western philosophy; for these groups the imperialist countries of the 19th century were just intruders, whose ideology was necessarily completely 'wrong' and therefore had to be overcome by a return to the 'true' believe system: original Islam. The hate against European colonial powers was further amplified and extended by the obviously imperialist behavior of the USA in the Middle East. To ride their monstrous cars and to lead a life of abundance the Americans had to steal the oil of Arab countries, if necessary by leading full-fledged wars and bomb attacks – this was the simple-minded, though very effective explanation brought forward.

Another reason why the Islamic Winter could get hold of the Arab rebellion so quickly was the fact that the global network of Islamic leaders always had been tightly knit and was fully intact when the rebellion started. This not only concerned the Muslim Brotherhood but also the groups surrounding the feudal leaders in Arab countries. Like the Catholic Church, which provided an important ideological pillar for the European feudal class in the Middle Ages, Islamic religious leaders were a necessary supplement to the reign of Arab kings. And even if a non-feudal military war-lord had seized power he immediately tried to get support from a faction of 'true' Islamist leaders. The minor role played by religion in the two World Wars of the 20th century has blinded many historians with respect to the persistence and longevity of religious networks. Even if the worldly counterpart has been chased away, the more secretly operating ideological leaders often manage to keep their communities alive[7]. Two thousand years of Christianity surviving slave-holder societies, feudalism, Stalinism, Fascism – and eventually capitalism - are a convincing example. This throws a spotlight on the importance of shared interpretation schemes needed by individuals in a more and more sophisticated interplay of actions in a globalizing world. Religions therefore were thought to become ever more flexible in the long-run to be able to survive; but in the short-run this is not always the

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[6] See [Rowbotham, 2002] for a vivid description.
[7] An outstanding example is the Catholic Church, which was able to maintain an active network during 70 years of Stalinism and even played a pivotal role in ending the Stalinist regime in Poland.

case. In the case of an acute struggle for political dominance more disciplined, rigorous and dogmatic groups often are able to act more effectively than more tolerant and democratically organized adversaries. In these cases, radicalism – with respect to actions as well as with respect to the interpretation of a religious dogma – can ascend to become the prevailing power.

If then the military equipment of the previous rulers falls into the hands of the diverse radical groups that start to occupy the political vacuum that emerged with the Arab Spring, then local civil wars can hardly be prevented. And this is exactly what happened and what was dubbed *Islamic Winter*. It was Islamic, since after all the common ideological root substituting Arab nationalism across all Arab countries was this religion, the different interpretations of the different militias all referred to the same source. And it reminded on the winter season, since it immediately could freeze all the blossoming new democratic aspirations that the proponents of the Arab Spring had hoped for.

Another consequence of this development was that the following social and political dynamics in the different countries followed the very different starting conditions that the disastrously unfolding Islamic Winter had to start with. The unifying elements that synchronized the Arab Spring across the Arab World were lost. From that point on, the history of each country has to be understood in a more country-specific way. Long looming tribal and ethnic conflicts intermingle with networks of religious communities and are overlaid by larger regional rivalries, e.g. between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East. With the Islamic Winter the Arab world fell apart again. To discuss the country-specific dynamics during these years is extremely interesting and probably can explain the respective current conditions rather well – but it would go far beyond the scope of this chapter to dare this venture. Here only a general conclusion can be drawn: With the breakdown of the political framework installed by the Western Allies in the Arab world after 1945 a vacuum of power emerged, which on the level of direct coercive power was filled by rivaling militias using as combat ideology different interpretations of the Koran. Pro-Western and anti-religious populations were concentrated in bigger cities only, but they were less organized and less militant.

One of the biggest social disasters certainly happened in Iraq after the victory of the USA. The simple-minded believe of US strategists that the unleashing of free market forces together with some training for local police forces would be sufficient to produce a new state with a stable market economy turned out to be a complete illusion. What was produced was a veritable nightmare: The military equipment of Saddam Hussein, as far as it was not destroyed, as well as many of his surviving former officers, were the core elements from which the IS was formed. In a sense it was just the same process as in many other places - as described above. What was different was (1) the particularly huge military arsenal, (2) the better trained personnel that could handle it, and (3) the vast, scarcely defended geographical area on which it could expand. With these assets it was no surprise that some radical religious leaders immediately became ideological front man of the new state. In its early stage IS was rather skilled in getting - usually secret - support from several other local players. Its

connection to the international terrorism of al-Qaeda, despite some differences[8], finally made clear that the situation in the Middle East is going to be very different to the one in North Africa. IS *is* a state with an army and internationally operating terrorist groups, it takes part in the war in Syria and in the meantime has a well-developed media and propaganda machinery. It was able to install persistent militant cells in several other countries, notably controlling a large territory in Libya. The endogenous development of the Islamic Winter thus has produced an epicenter of Islamic Radicalism in the Middle East. It is from this area, from the many battlefields of the war in Syria and the surrounding countries, from which the large stream of refugees is coming to Europe. The obvious route that these refugees were taking was the Balkan route.

This stream of refugees can be distinguished from those North-Africans who try to cross the Mediterranean Sea to arrive in Italy, France, Spain, or Portugal. The distinction is only geography-based, these refugees are also trying to escape from death, though civil war in their home country might be less violent and death by starvation might play a bigger role.

To recapitulate: The endogenous dynamics of military force (inherited from weapons trade and military support from the US, European states and Russia) combined with a radical religious ideology have transformed the Islamic Winter into a new power constellation. At the center a newly emerged Islamic State proclaims that it will conquer the world.

Two main drivers for the exodus of a large number of people from the North of Africa as well as from the Middle East can be identified. One evidently is war, the other one consists of living conditions that are drastically less favorable than those expected in the goal country of immigration. At the margin both motives coincide, war is just an extreme case of the second motive. To understand the overall evolution from the Arab Spring via the Islamic Winter to the Great Exodus it evidently is necessary to combine economic theory, political science and even some information science to grasp the role of religion and ideology.

There are two famous citations that may serve as icons bridging the gaps between the concepts 'war', 'politics', and 'economics':

'War is just the continuation of politics with different means.' (as Clausewitz writes somewhere)

'Politics is just compressed economics.' (as Lenin mentions somewhere)

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[8] While al-Qaeda proclaimed a war at the heartlands of its 'far enemy' (USA, Europe) and led its attacks as terrorist assaults, IS specialized in a war against the 'near enemy' and state-building. As a consequence, Baghdadi, the head of IS, declared himself as caliph, as a direct follower of Mohammed, to be more attractive for local populations, which in turn caused a split with al-Qaeda leader Zawahiri in Pakistan. Like several other Islamic groups, Zawahiri could not accept this self-proclaimed Islamic leadership of Baghdadi, see [Perthes, 2015, pp. 91-120]. As the US journal 'Foreign Affairs' reports in April 2016 a merger between a al-Qaeda and IS will take place as soon as the personal animosities between the two leaders disappear.

In both cases sensitivity borders – when economics becomes politics, when politics becomes war – play an implicit, but crucial role. These breakpoints are not really points in time but comparatively short time periods, when the set of political entities and their respective set of actions abruptly changes[9]. For the sake of convenience call the step from economics to politics the 1st transition phase, and the step from politics to war the 2nd transition phase. Under this methodological perspective the Islamic Winter has been a very specific influence that framed the two qualitative jumps; (1) from economic incompatibilities of post-WW 2 regimes via the Arab Spring to 'politics', and (2) from the emerging political turmoil to civil war.

The transition from rising contradictions in the sphere of economics to political dynamics has been investigated extensively, in fact it is at the root of why politics is called politics. Economic relations were compressed, were getting dense, in the polis of the ancient cities. It is the polis, where communication channels between groups of entities could get efficient enough to allow for the emergence of larger political entities, schools of philosophy and social classes. Combining the actions on the battlefield of ideology with the immediate goals of economic improvement of the own social class is the core of success in a stage of metamorphosis. As argued above, the narrow geographic range of a polis today has been substantially widened by the use of new technologies, smartphones and the internet. In the case at hand, the new arena of the Arab world now to a considerable part consists of the users of these technologies. The crucial point with respect to the Islamic Winter is that 'users' never are users only, as far as they are not the producers of the information transmitted between them, they rather are the *used* entities. After a first surge of an elementary chorus of insurrection, which is original information production, quickly comes the wave of interpretation of what has to change and how. And it is at this moment when existing information distribution nodes start to play a decisive role as transmitters of the goals of social classes via interpretation schemes; think of churches, mosques, newspapers, radio and TV stations, websites. It often has been the case that the progressive tendency of the first wave of revolt in this second stage of interpretation and partial loss of orientation has been diverted, even reversed, into an ideological framework that is borrowed from the distant past. A turn to a 'true' religious, ethnic or nationalist interpretation of the events often has occurred as a powerful mean to freeze progressive aspirations. Their command of the information distribution machinery allows certain social groups to take hold of the movement, in the case of the Islamic Winter most of these competitors relied on the still existing deeply rooted Islamism in the population. The use of the very old rivalry between Shiites and Sunnis is a typical example, its bewildering explosion into a broad spectrum of sects in Syria's civil war proves how unimportant the original religious text actually is.

From politics to (civil) war is a step that is closely linked to the availability of weapons, as described above. In the case at hand this not only concerns weaponry already used by the different paramilitary groups, it also concerns the military power of the potential ally behind

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[9] In [Hanappi & Scholz-Wäckerle, 2015] we have called these stages of evolution 'metamorphosis phase', in the natural sciences the phenomenon is called 'phase transition'.

the group; be it Saudi-Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Russia, or NATO States. Since the stakes traditionally are high in the Middle East (crude oil, NATO Eastern expansion frontier), war broke out there and not in Western Arab states. But with war, economic damage and humanitarian misery multiplies. As soon as brute force commands actions in a war embedded in global politics, the ideological battle of radical Islamism vanishes in the background. There is no more progressive tendency that needs to be frozen.

The victims of war that can escape go North, to Turkey, to Europe. Their arrival is not an unforeseeable, unhappy accident that troubles the EU at a time when its prosperity already started to dwindle away. It rather is a logical consequence of the post-colonial order that had been established after WW 2. In the last half century this order has lost its stabilizing force, it had to break up. Immigration to Europe will not be a transitory phenomenon that will disappear as soon as some international peacemakers control some fighting Arab tribes. There is a deep change of the global setting, which is on its way, compare [Dickens, 2015]. Remember Robert Zimmerman singing, '… and you better start swimming before you get drowned.'

**North-African Exodus**

It is a central thought of standard mainstream economics that human actions follow economic incentives. With respect to labor income this implies that workers and their families move to places where expected labor income is highest. Nevertheless, there are additional conditions that are to be observed to determine when and how strong such an economic mechanism sets in. First, it is clear that the expectations on possible living conditions abroad are built by using information and communication channels – with all the biases that these channels might add. What certainly can be safely assumed is that with modern ICT technologies information flows have grown tremendously. It would be extremely naïve to count on an information policy that can cut down information flows in a way that leaves low income countries in an isolated information environment where families there simply do not know that leaving conditions elsewhere are much better[10]. Second, there always is a sensitivity border of cultural boundedness in the population of a country. To leave your country means to cut all ties that are based on geographical facts: friends that stay there, a language environment, climate, shared cultural habits, etc. Only if the difference between economic standards experienced there and the expected economic standards assumed to be achievable abroad is large enough, only then the decision to emigrate will be taken.

The simplest measure to approximate the difference in living standards between countries is GDP per capita (GPPC). As diagram 2 shows, there is an enormous increase in this indicator of economic welfare as one moves from southern to northern countries. In particular, the jump

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[10] A similar misconception is the idea to deter people from emigration by twisting their expectation building with poster campaigns in their home countries that tell them that they will not be welcome in richer countries, e.g. a campaign of the Austrian government in the Middle East. First, this is not a credible threat since single politicians are conceivably not representing a countries population. Second, even the burden of some frictions in neighbourhood relations cannot outweigh an expected enormous jump in living conditions.

across the Mediterranean Sea implies that average income increases by a factor between 5.4 and 10.0, which means that even if expectations are to earn much less than the average citizen in Europe there still remains a lot to win compared to the local situation.
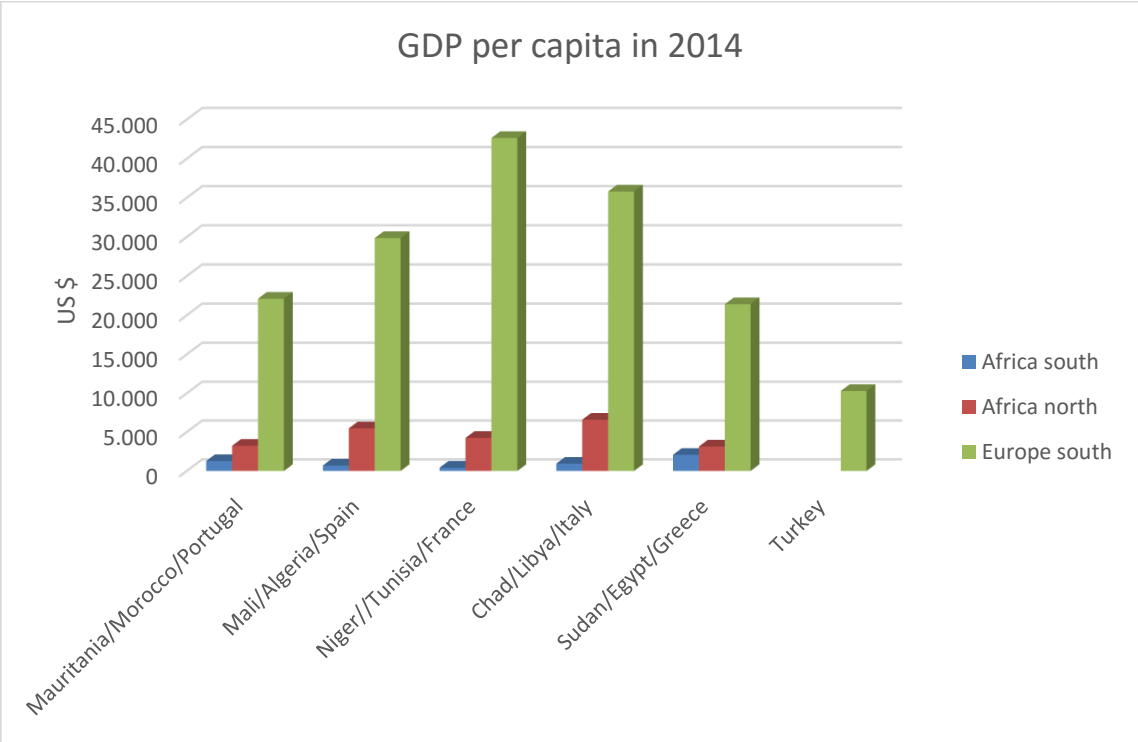


Diagram 2: Welfare gap from South to North
Source: United Nations Economic Database

The data for 2014 dramatically underlines the persistent source of immigration from North Africa to Europe. In a dynamic view it can be asked if this situation has worsened or improved in the last decades. Diagram 3 therefore shows how the factors between the countries displayed in diagram 2 have changed over time. (The ratio between Chad and Libya uses the vertical scale on the right side, since there have been exceptionally high values in the past.)

Only a few features can be derived from these rather unsteady dynamics. During the eighties, when the bi-polar global economy approached its end, a marked widening of the gap occurred. European countries developed faster than their north African neighbors. And later, in the 21st century, a slight convergence of ratios can be seen. Since the factors between north African countries and their southern neighbors by and large are in the same range, this implies that European immigrants from these countries can expect an average GDP per capita more than 50 times as high as their current one! The latter remark evidently does not really concern the Arab population but rather explains the exodus from black Africa.

This quick glance at the time line of economic inequality makes clear that the sudden wave of immigration has not been caused by a sudden widening of this gap. As argued above, it rather was another factor, namely the political breakdown of state power combined with new technological possibilities that suddenly unleashed the latent forces frozen by authoritarian regimes. But nevertheless the enduring inequality from now on will fuel population

movements, in the mid-run the lowered hurdles to be taken to leave Africa will persist[11]. In the long-run this gap is the source of immigration.
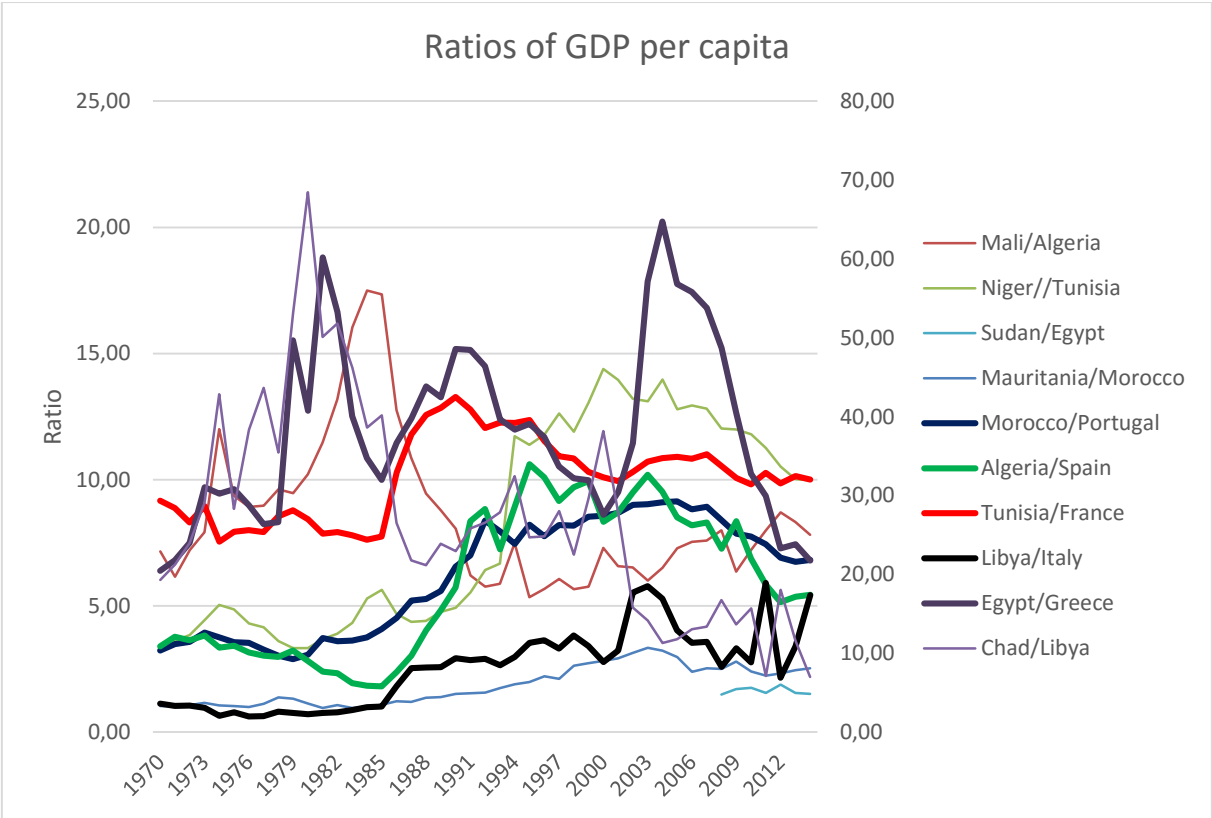


Diagram 3: Evolution of the income gap
Source: United Nations Economic Database

When certain territories become war zones - when the transition of particularly infuriating local politics or more global conflicts into military action and war occurs – then an additional wave of refugees can be expected.

In diagram 4 estimates of the development of migration streams from African Mediterranean countries to European Mediterranean Countries are shown, as well as the analogue movement from the countries south of the belt of African Mediterranean countries. The absolute numbers inserted in this diagram show how small the latter movement is compared to the movement across the Mediterranean Sea. Given the fact that the ratios in GPPC for the northern and southern belt of countries is in the same range as the ratio between European and African Mediterranean countries (compare diagram 3), this is a bit surprising. It suggests that GPPC plays only a minor role for immigration within Africa; in fact, a look at the details reveals that it has been civil war in Sudan only that caused larger immigration streams. The fear of some European politicians that all Africans will invade Europe for economic reasons

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[11] Conservative and nationalist politicians in Europe, of course, are aiming at re-building a fortress Europe with a strong military support of NATO.

thus finds no support with the data till 2010. In what follows, migration within Africa therefore will be ignored.
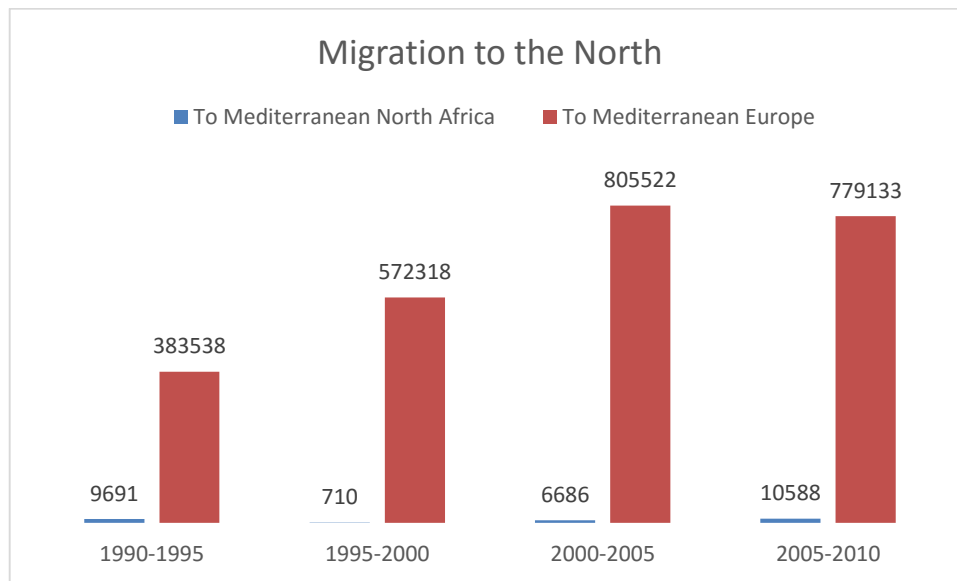


Diagram 4: Migration to the North
Source: Wittgenstein Centre Vienna, Global Migration Database

Despite the somewhat poor availability of data, it is tempting to provide some rough estimates of elasticities, i.e. with which factor (elasticity) a one percent increase of the GPPC ratio will affect a one percent increase of the emigration stream. The only historical period that provides an example for such an exercise – as already mentioned above and seen in diagram 3 - is the period around the breakdown of the bi-polar global system from the late 80-ties to the mid - 90-ties. As expected, elasticities for the stable authoritarian regimes of this period were inelastic (Morocco to Portugal: 0,04; Tunisia to France: 0,54; Egypt to Europe: 0,09). Only the already destabilizing case of Libya in its first civil war 1989-1996 (Libya to Italy: 2,87) and the civil war 1991-1997 in Algeria (Algeria to France: 2,72) indicate a strongly elastic reaction of migration flows. But even in these two cases it has not been the economic incentive per se that induced emigration, but rather the sudden lowering of state control and thus of the barriers to leave the country – amplified by danger of being killed - that came with the civil war[12]. The lesson to be learned from the period up to 2010 thus is: Migration was successfully stopped by north African regimes, with their strong form of authoritarian control of economics, as long as the transition from politics to war (2nd phase transition), which usually starts as civil war, did not occur.

In 2011 the Arab Spring, as discussed in the first part of this chapter, finally brought about this fully-fledged transition. From that point onwards, with little orderly state power present in the south of the Mediterranean Sea, the stream of refugees arriving in European ports has dramatically increased. A most recent Brussels estimate counted 130.000 refugees coming across the Mediterranean Sea in the first three months of 2016. One of many quantitative

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[12] A simulation model mimicking essential processes described in this chapter is currently developed in a companion paper titled 'Evolutionary Simulation of the Mediterranean Political Economy'.

indicators of the more recent tsunami of immigrants from the Middle East is the (monthly reported) number of applications for asylum in Germany, see diagram 5. In the first two months of 2016 there were already another 120.000 applications, which for the whole year result in an expectation of 720.000.
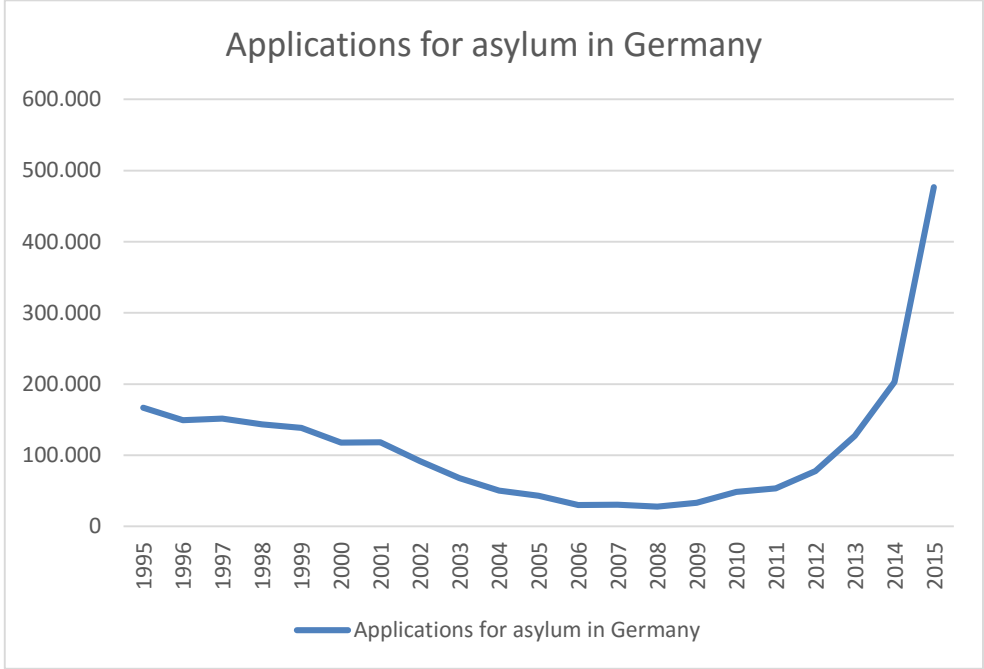


Diagram 5: Asylum applications
Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, Germany.

Still these high numbers should not be too frightening, since the driving force behind them is the war experience, and not a surge for higher income. Alone in Syria civil war is estimated to have killed so far at least 250.000 people.  If inclusive and visible good governance in Arab countries is installed[13], then the source of large migration streams is eliminated. In the mid-run this is a reachable, though not an easy task.

**Conclusion**

The 1$^{st}$ phase transition of the Arab world – the ***Arab Spring*** – has transformed the untenable economic situation that was kept quiet by authoritarian and feudal rulers into a chaotic turmoil of opposing political actors. Groups, classes, tribes, religious communities clashed; state-building processes evidently do not emerge spontaneously but take time. In classical political economy the view was that classes have to acquire class consciousness to be able to form coalitions and build more durable state institutions. With the many layers of heterogeneous players interested to gain local dominance in the short-run, no such constructive development could take place (just Tunisia hopefully might be a counter-example).

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[13] Several useful proposals for improvements are regularly published by the United Nations Development Programme, e g. [Mirkin, 2010].

What did set in rather quickly was the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase transition, from politics to civil war. The particular history of Arab states is responsible for a very special confluence of the missing state specific nationalisms substituted by an overarching religious commonality (Islam) on the one hand, and the already existing religious network organizations on the other hand. This rapidly led to a strong ideological dominance of religious leaders, which were able to channel the emancipatory trends that woke up in the Arab Spring into dogmatic and conservative Islamic rules. These rules appeared as a return to true Islamism freed from the lieutenants of Western capitalism that had oppressed Arabs before 2011. But any dogmatic religious organization that dominates politics is bound to acquire the typical structure of a feudal regime: ideological hierarchy needs its counterpart of a hierarchical military power structure, and vice versa. Paramilitary organization and religion, in this case called Islamic radicalism, have often proved to be a winning team. This freeze of emancipation of the Arab world has been dubbed *Islamic Winter*.

But while ideological dominance can spread quickly and retains a certain flexibility that can adjust to the local history of an Arab country, dominance of a paramilitary organization is a much more difficult task with a lot of rigidities to be overcome. International terrorist attacks that figured prominently around the globe since 9/11, first only could play a modest role to attract small groups of an extremely radicalized youth in some countries. Military strength had to appear as dominance over a local territory to serve as a focal point for the confluence of coercive power and religious leadership[14]. It could have been expected that this endogenously emerging need would first crystallize in Iraq. The country defeated by US forces and then left as an economic playing ground for people inspired by a completely misconceived neoclassical economic theory, without any idea of a necessary political infrastructure[15], such a country had to become what a few years later has been called 'a failed state'. Syria, the neighboring country, was the ideal place for expansion of IS. Baschar al-Assad, Syria's ruler, with his stubborn resistance against the aspirations of the Arab Spring, fighting rival groups with brutal military forces had already larger parts of Syria's population turning against him. The infrastructure that the Islamic State seemed to offer could easily appear superior to the already waging civil war between Assad and his rivals[16]. Then the unbelievable rapid expansion of IS necessarily became a full-fledged war on many frontiers. The *mass exodus* of families in the Middle East as well as the surge of immigrants from Africa, where a mini-state of IS in Libya and IS cells further in the south of Africa wage war, were just an immediate consequence of the success of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

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[14] It is straightforward that Baghdadi, the leader of IS, therefore considers himself as the incarnation of Allah's will as well as its military leader - with the aspiration to conquer the world.

[15] Neoclassical theory is proud to be 'institution free '; this adds to its generality as proponents say. In Iraq the US army only trained some Iraqi police forces as a remainder of an 'institution of last resort'. When they hit in the east of Iraq, it was an easy prey for the troops of IS with their much more consistent ideological and military structure.

[16] First Assad seemed to have been not too unhappy about the successes of IS, since they at least occupied territory belonging to his local enemies.

What will happen next? As of March 2016, the Islamic State seems to be on the retreat. It loses territory, and worse than that it loses fighters and attractiveness to recruit new ones. Since the only answer its leaders ever have learned is to be more aggressive and more dogmatic, they intensify singular terrorist attacks in Europe and the rest of the world. A central role in the organization of these attacks is played by the networks maintained by fighters trained in the secret services of former (and contemporary) rulers in the Arab world. They will be able to continue their attacks as long as the IS exists. Therefore, a final defeat of the Islamic State, a complete loss of its territory, is a necessary pre-condition for peace. Some signs for this possibility are currently appearing, e.g. there are signals from Assad to allow for participation of rival groups in governance, probably motivated by a partial loss of support from Russia. Of course, much will depend on the next president of the USA: If Donald Trump reverses the deal with Iran and changes US foreign policy in the Middle East (as he promises), then we are in a new setting. In a similar way European policy might take surprising turns if right wing nationalist political parties assume state power in some large European countries. In all these cases the predictive power of scientific analysis of the political economy shrinks to a week by week forecast.

Finally, it is remarkable how insignificant in this analysis the role of the **content** of **religion**, of Islam, really is[17]. The longevity of religions like Christianity or the Islam, is based on the vagueness of their content, on the insignificance of their texts. To survive some 1500 years, to provide ideological dominance for power structures as different as the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, medieval kingdoms, Saudi Arabia, Gaddafi's Libya, modern EU states, the USA, Erdogan's Turkey, and Baghdadi's IS (to name only a few), this really needs a vast space for possible interpretations.

Religion thrives by walking on two feet: On one side (1) it is based on helping an existing power structure to maintain its dominance. It does so by influencing the internal (mental) model building process of all members of this power structure. On the other side (2) it provides simple rule sets, which determine actions of individuals for all cases for which the individual is unsure to decide. The key to this influence on individuals is the **concept of believe**: When confronted with a phenomenon (and a decision to be taken) that is only partially understood religious rules provide a short-cut for decision-making by suggesting to the individual that it *has to believe* that the proposed decision is the best one. The stronger the believe, the stronger is the power of the rule-making religious organization, and the weaker will be the wish of members to modify the religious dogma[18]. Non-knowledge, as the baseline of religious

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[17] As Edward Said once (1995 !) lucidly remarked, '…what appears in the West to be the emergence, return to, or resurgence of Islam is in fact a struggle in Islamic societies over the definition of Islam.' [Said, 2003, p.333].

[18] In this context the opposition between religion and science becomes very clear: Both start with the fact that human knowledge is incomplete. But then the goal of the religious believe system is to retain as much non-knowledge as possible to further construct its dogma of religious rules, i.e. to increase *believe* in these rules. Science, on the contrary, aims at *reducing* believe and substituting it by more knowledge. Knowledge thus for science is always preliminary knowledge that has to be increased by reducing believe, whereas knowledge in a religious system consists of the belief in a monolithic religious rule-set, which itself is thought to be eternal and rigid.

rule sets and the organizations producing them, can have several sources. In ancient societies the lack of scientific knowledge often was complemented by such a set of useful religious rules, short-cuts to master the daily life of a tribe in a wiser way. A plethora of religions emerged around the globe. Today an unbelievable amount of knowledge has been produced by the human species in the last two hundred years, but this knowledge is split-up in myriads of topics, in scientific communities and ordinary people working in places all around the globe. This has led to the contemporary phenomenon of global alienation[19], which in turn resulted in a renewed surge of religious communities.

To understand international terrorism as a phenomenon of Islamic radicalism this double nature of religion has to be taken into account. It resembles opium: The toxic content of a religious believe system only reveals itself if the seductive attraction that it exerts on its users is transformed into the sinister social consequences that their religion-driven actions produce, become visible. Suicide bombers take this contradictory feature to the extreme[20]: Their voluntary self-extinction is a sacrifice to the larger goal, an eternal reign of the caliphate. Individually, the awareness of the complete insignificance of their existence in a world characterized by global alienation is balanced by the sweet feeling to contribute to the highest of all goals, Allah's eternal glory – manifested on earth as the Islamic State reigned by his representative caliph Baghdadi.

As already argued above, global alienation and re-emergence of religious sects are certainly most alarming elements of the recent state of global political economy, but for the immediate future of the further development of civil wars south of Europe, religious rivalries are just another ideological instrument with which existing power elites and warlords try to ammunition their fighters. If it turns out to be possible to finally initiate a continuation of the emancipation process in the Arab world, i.e. to initiate an 'Arab Summer', then it can safely be assumed that it will thrive on a strong anti-religious and anti-clerical support of the Arab population. Neither Western 'Christian value systems' nor a return to a new variant of a 'true Islam', or any other religion is an adequate ideology to heal the wounds of a population that suffered for so many years from misused ideological manipulation. With the help of modern information and communication technology Europe's role could be to support such a second wave of an **Arab Summer**. But to be able to do so European governments must show that they themselves are capable to defend their emancipatory unification process against the threats of renewed nationalism and isolation policies within a 'fortress Europe'[21]. Perhaps the scientific community that already spreads its intellectual network across the involved

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[19] See also [Hanappi and Hanappi-Egger, 2012].

[20] The basic logical structure of this thought seems to be a common feature of monotheist religions of the Middle East. In Christianity, Jesus - as the son of God - had to be crucified by the mob of pagans for the eternal glory of his father's rule system; suicide bombers die with 'Allahu Akbar' (Allah is the Greatest) on their lips.

[21] Another immediate threat would be European foreign policy that returns to the establishment of puffer zone countries with dictators that help to lock-off the Middle East and North Africa. Again local military rulers could be supported with European money to maintain refugee camps. It is evident that such a policy is short-sighted, since it only re-installs the reasons for the rebellions in 2011. The next revolutions will follow shortly. A wiser policy should concentrate on integration mechanisms in Europe and intense cooperation with emancipatory forces in Arab countries.

continents, can play an important progressive role by providing a positive vision of peaceful cooperation of European, Arab, and North-African societies; this chapter tried to provide a modest example in this direction.

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