

For the sake of the Mediterranean... de-securitize the Arab Spring !

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Abstract

The so called Arab Spring has put The Mediterranean in an era of remaking. Over again, Mediterranean security is being at stake. This paper examines the profound implications of securitizing the Arab Spring on The Mediterranean Security Complex, as developed in Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver's *Regions and Powers* (Buzan and Wæver 2003). The theoretical framework of the paper takes advantage of Buzan and Wæver's work on Regional Security Complexes and securitization/de-securitization processes they are defined through. Then, it attempts at casting light on the defects of any discursive discourse that aims at over-presenting the Arab Spring as a security threat that urges "exceptional" perspectives to be dealt with. Afterward, the paper concludes with a call for de-securitizing the Arab Spring as a necessary step on any future roadmap to secure the region.

Introduction

Since the end of the cold war, twenty years ago, security structure of the Mediterranean region has been dramatically changing, up to rise of the so called¹ “Arab Spring,” very recently. However, the widespread changes the Arab Spring raises do not affect only the Arab countries concerned (North Africa and Middle East), but it also affects the entire Mediterranean region and, meanwhile, the relevant EU’s policies.

It is evident why the EU should deal with the consequences of the Arab Spring more than any other international actor should do. Three reasons, however, could be mentioned in this regard. First, EU’s vulnerability to diverse and serious threats coming from the Southern Mediterranean: (i) legal immigration, extremism, organized crime, arms and drugs traffic, etc. Second, the complex relationship between security and economics. The survival of the EU’s economic interests in its Southern neighbourhood depends significantly on how (much) it contributes to (re)defining the security threats there and the policies that must be adopted to deal with them. Needless to say that North Africa, for instance, represents a “backyard” market for EU economics and its main supplier with energy resources, this makes security stability very crucial for the uninterruptedness of both flows: goods, services and investments southwards and energy supplies northwards. Third, the EU’s increasing ambition to counter-balance the US global hegemony depends heavily on maintaining its influence in the region; in this regard, geographic proximity is not the only factor, common history and social-multicultural increasing interactions represent another significant one.

¹ I use the phrase “so called” to express some reservation on the term “Arab Spring,” as the promised flourishing outcomes of this spring have not come evident yet, except for three apparently successful cases, Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen to some extent. Joseph Massad argues that the term itself “was not simply an arbitrary or even seasonal choice of nomenclature, but rather a US strategy of controlling their aims and goals.” He mentions that the American journal *Foreign Policy* coined the term first. See Joseph Massad, “The ‘Arab Spring’ and other American seasons,” viewed on January 10th 2013, <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/08/201282972539153865.html>>

The Arab Spring has brought many serious challenges to EU policies in the region, challenges that need to be effectively answered. However, the changed context of these challenges requires thinking and acting in a different paradigm.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first section suggests a reading of the Arab Spring rise, claiming that the way how the phenomenon is addressed reflects the way how it is understood. The second section suggests Copenhagen School's (de)securitization theory and Barry Buzan & Ole Wæver's Regional Security Complexes theory to examine the implications of over-securitizing the Arab Spring's aftermath, both for the region and for the future of the EU as a global "normative" power in international politics. The third section argues that the next recommended choice to be adopted by the EU is to de-securitize the Arab Spring and to contribute effectively to reinforcing democratization in the region and to discard its traditional security-based obsession in EU-Mediterranean relations. Finally, the conclusion calls for what is to be termed the *East-Central-Europeanization* of the Arab Spring, an idea that might appear idealistic, yet very inspiring.

Understanding the Arab Spring

The Arab spring does not need a definition, it rather needs understanding. The *Butterfly Effect* theory can be very inspiring at this point. The first spark of the uprisings in Tunisia, a suicide incident of a fruit seller (Mohammed El Bouazizi) in a little known village because of being mistreated by police, has spread swiftly and unpredictably to the rest of the Arab world. The protests started peaceful in Tunisia but ended up in civil wars in Libya, Yemen and currently in Syria. Limited protests against poverty, unemployment and economic marginalization in a very little known village (Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia) did not lead only to the overthrow of the national government in the country and the flight of the head of its ageing authoritarian regime (Tunisian President, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali), but to bloody civil war causing cruel change through the assassination of another one in a neighbouring country (Libyan Leader, Muammar El Gaddafi) and

also to another civil war with complex regional extensions that seems, up to now, hard to be internationalized (Syria).

When dealing with the Arab Spring, the *why-it-has-happened* question seems easier than the *how-it-has-happened* one. The distinction made here reflects the unheated debate between *causes*-based analysis (*why*) and *reasons*-based analysis (*how*). Totalitarianism, political corruption, human rights violations, speech freedom oppression, election fraud, economic decline, poverty to the extent of destitution, unemployment, socio-demographic pressures, etc. are simple causes that can be stated objectively through simple observation. However, analyzing the Arab Spring in such a way does leave no true option for the involved actors to invent nontraditional avenues to light at the end of the tunnel. However, focusing on *how-it-has-happened* question goes beyond the causes stated above. The Arab Spring processes should be placed under more scrutiny in order to be understood not just explained, because any further relevant recommendations to be given should be transformative and able of making tangible and positive long term changes in the region. Moreover, the focus on *how-it-has-happened* question is supposed to give way to clearer insights about the consequences.

In this paper, I cast much light on two worth-mentioning factors that are believed to be helpful in such an endeavour. The first one is local and the second one is regional if not global. First, the Arab Spring cannot be understood without taking into consideration the socio-economic underlying changes that have been recently taking place in Arab societies. The emergence of a wide better educated generation of people inside the Arab world has made a great difference. In the past, opposition tended to be political and used to function abroad. However, the Arab youth inside their own home countries have recently become capable of making use of the diverse social media widely available due to new ICTs and of developing local channels of speech and communication very freely.

Interestingly, the (new) untraditional channels had kept save from the authoritarian governments' traditional methods of control and surveillance. Social media and new ICTs did not only facilitate communication and news as well as information exchange, it also enabled the Arab youth to arrive easily at information and news and make them circulate easily, widely and swift. Alongside this change, economic disparity between the poor and the rich due to corruption had been exacerbating. The interaction between these two aspects, the economic and the social, can be demonstrated through mentioning that a great majority of frustrated unemployed people, who were undergoing economic difficulties, were mostly university graduated and well-educated people who had full access to social media and new ICTs.

Second, the Arab Spring should be regionally as well as globally re-contextualized. Global spread of global norms, such as human rights, democracy, speech freedom, etc., has triggered the uprisings against longstanding authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, Husni Mubarek in Egypt, Ali Abdallah Salah in Yemen, Mu'ammar El Gaddafi in Lybia, El Assads in Syria, in addition to the Arab monarchies that do not greatly differ from those dictatorships. It is very important, analytically, to stress this *causal* connection between the Arab Spring and the spread of global norms urging people to strive for a better life. However, it seems that what happened was a notable shift in the well established concept of modernization. The shift had two aspects. First, it moved the concept from economics centeredness to politics centeredness. The historical experience with economic development pursuit in the Third World made it obvious that economic modernization is ineffectively useless without being accompanied with indispensable prerequisite political modernization steps, including democratization, institutional reforms, establishing political participation practice and deliberation on power, empowering the role of civil society and socialization tools, etc.

Understanding the Arab Spring from this perspective is strongly significant for the recent heated debate about the EU's normative power (Manners 2002; Laidi, 2008). The argument made

here is that if the EU tends to sustain its widely desirable role as an international “promoter of norms,” (Manners 2002, p. 236) then it should deal with the Arab Spring as an embedded outcome of the normative power based policies that have been adopted earlier by the EU. In other words, the EU should - if not *must* - decide about its stance towards the changes being created by the Arab Spring in the region; and the decision should - if not *must* - approach those changes from the EU’s commitment to *normativizing* its role as an international actor.

Indeed, the historically support - or at least neutrality and silence -, that characterized the European policies towards many Arab dictatorships’ political performance (Zine El Abidine Ben Ali’s Tunisia and Husni Mubarek’s Egypt are still good examples), casts many doubts upon the next steps to be taken by the EU. These doubts are still justifiable at least for many Arab revolutionaries and change advocates, as they usually believe that the EU’s support to Arab dictatorships was essentially because those dictatorships existed to maintain the European interests in the region. Knoops mentions that “the EU continued its engagement with the authoritarian regimes in the southern Mediterranean for three reasons: political security such as preventing the rise of political extremism, energy security (mainly oil) and lastly, to manage migration.” (Knoops 2011, p. 13)

Herman van Rompuy, President of the European Council, echoes what has been said above in his statement, “it was a difficult choice between defending our values such as human rights and our interests, such as stability in the Middle East”. (Knoops 2011, p. 3) Therefore, the EU’s response to the Arab Spring should be wisely synthetic; its regional interests as an ambitious global economic power and its international role as a promising global normative power. In other words, any EU’s policy towards the Arab Spring should be constantly reconsidered so that it takes seriously peoples’ aspirations for the rights, freedoms, norms and values it claims to adopt as a global normative power.

Next, I argue that the EU's response to the Arab Spring should not be based on security concerns. There is a focal assumption to be brought in mind here. The assumption suggests that democratization in the Arab world will not take place as smoothly as it took place in Eastern Europe twenty years ago. Accordingly, the seemingly complicated (short-term) consequences of the Arab revolutions should not be over-securitized; a move that would likely cause the EU to misplace the opportunities the Arab Spring has brought to the region.

Securitization of the Arab Spring ?

It is important to review briefly the concept of securitization as a determinant to Regional Security Complexes (Buzan and Wæver 2003). The paper suggests introducing the Mediterranean region as a Regional Security Complex for (limited) analytical purposes; therefore, it is not to be rigidly examined. Later, analysis demonstrates that (de)securitization processes within the northern-southern Mediterranean Complex do not operate, consistently, in the two courses. Rather, the northern actor(s) tend to securitize, while the southern actors are expected to tend to prioritize de-securitizing the Arab Spring's consequences.

This section begins with depicting the intellectual context within which the concept evolved. Copenhagen School of security studies, particularly Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver's contribution, contends that security is constructed and what appears as an objective security threat could be just a non-security issue that has been *intersubjectively* securitized.

Securitization, as a process, refers to the introduction of a normal problem as an "existential threat" for a particular referent object, which has a legitimate claim to continue its existence and making the relevant audience believe in that discourse. Wæver makes the notion more graspable by answering the simple question, "what makes something a security problem?" The answer he suggests is unexpectedly simpler than the answer, "something is a security problem when elites declare it to be so." (Wæver 1995, p.55) This makes securitization merely a speech act. When the

relevant audience believes in the discourse², the next move will be to legitimize taking measures beyond the daily routines, putting the issue on top of the agenda and even breaching the rules which would normally be binding for the securitizing actor(s). (Wæver 1995, p.50)

Besides, for Buzan and Wæver, a Regional Security Complex is “a set of units whose major processes of securitization, de-securitization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another.” (Buzan and Wæver 2003, p. 44) Although involving securitization and/or de-securitization processes in Regional Security Complexes theory implies a promising constructivist undertaking; neo-realism, through its focus on the structure of Regional Security Complexes and their patterns of power distribution, still inspires its theoretical understanding as well as its empirical usability. This legitimizes, to a certain extent, the claim that Regional Security Complexes theory represents a middle-ground that bridges the gap between neo-realism and constructivism. (Hamchi 2012)

What defines a Regional Security Complex is the existence of a high level of intense security interdependence between the units within the complex. Security interdependence includes different processes of constructing security, whether securitizing or de-securitizing threats and/or methods of dealing with them. Threats should be of a focal value, since “most [of them] travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, [and] insecurity is often associated with proximity.” (Buzan and Wæver 2003, p. 11) Shared security (mis)perceptions among the Regional Security Complex’s units are of great importance to such processes.

Again, Buzan and Wæver define securitization as “the discursive process through which an *intersubjective* understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat.” (Buzan and Wæver 2003, p. 491 [stress added]) The concept is

² Securitization processes should be seen as a set of *iterative* (re)actions between the securitizing actor(s) and a targeted audience.

based on two moves. The first one is to transform, through processes of social construction, a normal issue into a security existential threat in order to legitimize ‘urgent and exceptional measures’ to deal with it, and this is the second move that consists securitization. The call for ‘urgent and exceptional measures’ to deal with the *securitized* issue is to be enabled because merely routine measures are supposed to be used to deal with the issue before being securitized. The two moves are politically and socially interlinked to the extent that tracing their boundaries apart becomes more and more difficult as securitization process progresses. As it has been shown earlier, understanding securitization processes is crucial to defining Regional Security Complexes (Buzan and Wæver 2003, p. 44) and *vice versa*. This importance comes from the role such regionally interlinked processes play in making the Regional Security Complex *complex*.

The relevance of such theoretical background is very important both to understanding the EU’s unsurprising response towards the Arab Spring’s consequences (securitization) and to critically reflect on the primary steps the EU is recommended to take in order to address those consequences (de-securitization). Next, I will expand on two major points.

Firstly, the recent history of EU-Mediterranean relations suggests a rationale that could better account for the securitization of the Arab Spring by the EU. It is undisputable that the EU’s approach to its relations with the southern Mediterranean countries has been always constructed on prioritizing security and [to a certain still limited extent] economic concerns (stability, security, counter-terrorism, economic interests, etc.) *vis à vis* normative concerns (human rights, democracy, etc.). (Benantar 2012) This pattern of preferences has led the EU to maintain, as mentioned above, a supportive, or at least silent, stance towards the political authoritarian structure of the Arab governing regimes in the region.

However, the significant changes, due to the Arab Spring developments, have put the EU almost in a *dilemmatic* situation. It should either maintain the old pattern of preferences and, therefore, the same stance towards the falling Arab authoritarian regimes or re-prioritize its pattern

of preferences and, therefore, give more importance to normative concerns, which actually would make the EU more responsive to the Arab peoples' demands, locally as well as regionally. The latter option seems, of course, more consistent with what was mentioned above about the EU as a promising global normative power. Otherwise, it would be considered as a "widely denounced" contribution to making democratization in the Arab world continues failing, a [moral] responsibility the EU does not seem ready to take. (Benantar 2012) Following this argument, the securitization of the Arab Spring is just an extension to the earlier security-centered approach adopted by the EU to its relations with the Mediterranean Arab countries.

Secondly, the Arab revolutions have brought about uneven cases of political authority vacuum. Even in Tunisia and Egypt where transition may be argued to be successful, institutionalization process is still ambivalent. This uncertain situation, which does not affect only the political sphere but also the economic one, has "resurrected" the debate about failed/collapsed states, more robustly than ever. The implications of this debate for the Arab Spring can be understood through reminding of the traditional perspective that considers failed/collapsed states as one of the main sources of serious security concerns, and consequently they require security prescriptions in which security concerns are introduced as superior than development requirements or any priorities of economic capability (re)building. Then, it would be understandably logical to assume that the EU tends to securitize the Arab Spring since it has seriously exacerbated state failure phenomenon in the region.

Thirdly, (il)legal immigration and (Islamist) extremism issues are still at the core of the EU's security concerns in the region. (Islamist) Extremism gained much more momentum within the EU's decision apparatus due to the rise of many Islamist parties throughout many Arab countries (Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Libya to a certain extent.) some of which are assumed to be extremist (Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists as well). However, (il)legal immigration still challenges the EU-Mediterranean Security Complex. Moreover, the Arab Spring has brought an additional

burden to (il)legal immigration in the Complex, “the men, women, and children coming to Europe for protection or in search of a better life,”³ as expressed by the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström. (Quoted in Houthoff 2012, p. 6)

Certainly, with recent relatively striking statistics indicating that between January and March 2011, an estimated 25,000 “illegal immigrants” arrived on the Italian island of Lampedusa from North Africa alone (Vaughan-Williams 2011, p. 1 [stress original]), so many voices have (re)gained momentum calling for more securitizing acts to deal with this issue. The enduringly dilemmatic question has been always, “[...] what is being done to secure the EU’s 11,000 km external land borders, 43,000 km sea borders, and 593 international airports confronted by c.700 million border-crossers per annum - up to 4 million of whom [...] are potentially “illegal”?” (Vaughan-Williams 2011, p. 2 [stress original]) The shortcut answer up to now has been, “securitize them!”

However, differing voices still seem as if they tend to sing out of the tune, focusing on the unhelpful consequences of such a perspective both for the EU as a *union* and for the Regional Complex.

De-securitizing the Arab Spring: thinking beyond security “obsession”

In the midst of the above-mentioned debate concerning the Arab Spring refugees’ protection, there are stances which tend to stand differently. Houthoff’s work, referring to Malström (2011), “stresses the importance that the EU continues to give protection and prospects of a better future for refugees in need of help and concurrently to uphold the commitments to international refugee agreements such as the Geneva Convention.” Furthermore, it is believed elsewhere that “not offering protection has wider implications on the construction and strength of the EU. It emphasizes flaws of internal

³ A further disturbing issue is the lack of agreement between member states on and asylum policy (Vaughan-Williams 2011)

cooperation between EU member states.” The best example seemingly is when France decided to reinstate “its border control with Italy out of distrust that the border will not be adequately secured.” The argument, according to Houthoff referring to Parkes (2011) and Nielsen (2012), is that such practice is “contra-efficient to the main idea of Europeanization.” Besides, “in many areas of European cooperation, the free travel area is suffering from a chronic lack of trust between its members.” Accordingly, if “the full effects of a collapse of Schengen Area [w]ere untold, [that] would likely affect the free movement of goods as well.” (Houthoff 2012, p. 8)

Consistently, Guild (2009) believes that “the consequences stemming from the securitization of migration [has] complicated the ways in which states live up to their obligation to protect refugees in accordance with the Geneva Convention.” She explains that the “failure of the state to protect refugees is a consequence of the securitization of migration. In contrast to other scholars, she focuses on the individual rather than the state’s collective security. Exclusion of migrants is the consequence of the state’s maintenance of collective security, which enters into conflict with the individuals’ claim of individual security. Linking this back to border policy and refugee protection in the EU: when the EU tries to secure the collective by improving EU border security, individuals not belonging to this collective – migrants including refugees – enter into conflict with state security.” (Houthoff 2012, p. 10)

Correspondingly, Vaughan-Williams urges the European elites to very carefully reconsider the treatment of migration as a security problem that necessitates increasingly military-style responses. He believes that “a quasi -militarization of Europe’s borders is neither likely to enhance the EU’s security nor migrants’ security in the long run as both enter into a lethal game of cat and mouse. From the perspective of EU member states ‘Border Wars’ are a costly option in a time of austerity and could lead to greater threats in terms of the potential for both blow-back and/or the corrosion of the liberties central to the EU’s self-image and democratic legitimacy.” (Vaughan-Williams 2011, p. 5)

It is indisputably obvious that the way how the EU responds to the Arab Spring depends on the way how the challenges it brings are perceived. The argument defended here and elsewhere is extensively theorized and deeply rooted in historical experience. However, after more than two decades since the end of the cold war and the rise of critical security studies field, both within Copenhagen School and within the discipline more generally, it seems that the securitized *raison d'état* is still inescapable.

In the case of the EU-Mediterranean Security Complex, to bring Buzan and Wæver back again (Buzan and Wæver 2003), what they referred to as the interlinkedness of the processes of securitization and/or de-securitization among the constituting units of the Complex is apparently missing; although security problems still to a certain extent cannot be analyzed or resolved apart from one another. Of course, even the last phrase [cannot be resolved...] is still more or less inaccurate with the increasing critics that have been gaining significance concerning the ignorance of the southern Mediterranean perspective on regional security ((il)legal immigration and extremism issues, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, etc.). Eventually, a considerable degree of divergence between the EU's and the southern Mediterranean's perspective has emerged in respect of the patterns of securitization/de-securitization processes in the region; they have seemingly become less interlinked. Whereas the EU tends to engage in securitization-based processes, the (Arab) southern Mediterranean tends to stick to de-securitizing demands concerning many issues, before and after the Arab Spring.

De-securitization, by contrast to securitization, refers to the process whereby an issue moves out of security sphere back into the normal processes of the public/political sphere. In other words, an issue is de-securitized when it is moved out of a security agenda and no longer is defined as a security threat, a process through which the use of exceptional means (decided within security and defense circles) is delegitimized; and therefore neither security language nor security logic is used.

The emphasis made on de-securitization as a recommended choice for the EU's policies towards the Arab Spring's aftermath is not only of normative significance, even though the EU, as a global actor, should take this significance into serious consideration as it has been argued for, here and elsewhere⁴. Interestingly, de-securitization option still enjoys a great strategic significance yet.

The question, that has been officially skipped over and over again, is whether securitizing the Arab Spring would bring (more) security to the EU and to the region above all. Needless to say that the notion of security must [not should] be reflected on in the light of the 1990's debate between widening vs. deepening security advocates (Buzan and Hansen 2009) on the one hand, and in the light of security comprehensiveness developed by critical security studies on the other hand. Comprehensiveness involves pluralism of dimensions (hard and soft, military and societal, etc.) and pluralism of referent objects (states, individuals, groups, etc.) For instance, the historical experiences related to from-outside-reforms have shown the virtues of reinforcing development-friendly instead of market-friendly economic reforms, as the latter type of reforms usually does not result in good consequences on societal stability in developing countries. This is a defect that should be acknowledged and wisely dealt with when it comes to the EU's approach to reforms issues after the Arab Spring, as the more Arab developing countries are unable answer the economic development challenges, the more the EU is vulnerable to more immigrants coming from there seeking better economic opportunities, the more the region is securitized, and so on.

Moreover, a positive shift in the EU's stance towards democratization in the southern Mediterranean must be regarded as insistent and indispensable. Benantar (Benantar 2012) maintains that the democratization of Arab regimes is expected to legitimize the different Euro-Mediterranean

⁴ Vaughan-Williams argues that "principles such as the right to seek asylum and non-refoulement are at the heart of international law and the veracity of the EU's claims to upholding "freedom, security, and justice" - not only in the territory of member states, but globally - ultimately depends on their respect whatever the external pressures." (Vaughan-Williams 2011, p. 5)

Security Dialogues and initiatives⁵. The argument, made here, premises that debating the Euro-Mediterranean initiatives transparently by the local democracy actors, which are supposed to be effectively empowered by the Arab Spring (civil society institutions, parliaments, think tanks, (social) media, etc.), will make them gain Arab public opinion's support. Meanwhile the EU should not operate as a *re-actor* to democratization process in the Arab world. It should rather work (even harder) to be an effective *actor* in the process. Such a shift should be well appraised.

Knoops, interestingly, claims that the EU must use conditionality effectively to support political reforms, at least to atone for his earlier mistake of keeping “increasing aid to countries such as Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco even though there was no visible progress in the improvement of human rights in these countries.” (Knoops 2011, p. 13)

Furthermore, de-securitization dynamics should be extended to the political Islam's role in building democracy in Arab countries as long as they play democracy rules. As noted by Rosa Balfour (Balfour 2011), a misleading myth such of the incompatibility of democracy and Islam must be dispelled. Tariq Ramadan “urge[s] the West to try and understand that Islamism occupies several positions across the ideological spectrum. Not all of them are radical and in fact many of them reject violence and condemn acts of terrorism.” The best example to be mentioned outside the Arab world is the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, “a party with Islamist roots working in a democratic arena.” (Knoops 2011, p. 17) It is very important to remind that political Islam used to be double-securitized, by the EU to legitimize its political support to the authoritarian regimes against the democratization demands of their (Islamist) opposition and by the Arab regimes themselves to maintain their political survival.

⁵ Benantar's (2012) work is on Euro-Atlantic options towards the Arab Spring.

Conclusion: towards *East-Central-Europeanizing* the Arab revolutions!

East-Central-Europeanizing the Arab Spring is an idea that might appear idealistic, yet very inspiring. The constructivist wisdom, “ideas all the way down,” is of great relevance. What is expected from the EU towards the recent changes in its neighbourhood, in the midst of its emerging as a global normative power, depends heavily on how it perceives the Arab Spring itself and how it perceives its actual role as an international actor.

Successful establishment of democracy and market economy may take a decade or more, as has been demonstrated in the case of East Central Europe (Balfour 2011); it is still not impossible. Despite the dissimilarities between the two cases, it seems that ideas and perceptions about what *home* is hoped to become and how *neighbours* may constructively contribute to it decide dramatically the intensity of the dissimilarities.

I quote Balfour again, “[...] constructive engagement of the EU in building peaceful and legitimate order, economic development and social stability in Europe’s [changing] neighbourhood would greatly contribute to strengthen Europe’s role in the world. Likewise, failure and regression in the region would significantly weaken Europe’s stance beyond the neighbourhood.” (Balfour 2011, p. 2)

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