The 1980s were marked by a long series of defaults, moratoria on repayment, renegotiations of existing loans and negotiations on new loans. Since the second half of the 1980s, such complex phenomenon has passed down onto history under the label of the "international debt crisis". Among Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia, this was the case as for the Middle East and North Africa as well. Though almost all states were involved in the process, the crisis concerned in particular Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria. A wide literature has dealt with the subject, with renewed interest since the beginning of the "great recession" in 2008 and the “Arab uprisings“ of 2011. Most of such literature, however, suffers from two main (interrelated) flaws: on the one hand, there are only a few case studies based on archival research; on the other, it most works assume that creditor/debtor negotiations necessarily had to end with the creditors’ upper hand. However, history is rich with cases that prove that debtors can either have it their way, or force creditors to compromise. It appears necessary, thus, to investigate the negotiations empirically, in order to observe the playing out of the respective strengths and weaknesses of creditors and debtors in the specific conditions of the 1980s.

The project seeks to select one scholar who can engage with numerous archives from creditors, debtors and international organizations, with a broad approach that keeps account of the interactions of various factors in determining the final outcome of the negotiations concerning the Middle East and North Africa: negotiating assets and liabilities, negotiating skills, existence or lack of alternatives, and the role of language and the public opinion. The candidate will focus its research activities on one,
or more, of the following case-studies: Algeria, Tunisia, Iran, Turkey.

6 – Requirements and Plan of Activities:

The Commission will evaluate positively any candidate who has completed his/her Ph.D on a topic related to the area or issues under scrutiny by this project. Qualifications obtained abroad will be examined by the Committee, which may consider them as being equivalent for the purposes of admission, without prejudice to the current laws. Candidates must be in possession of the requirements at the deadline established by this selection procedure announcement.

The candidate should be able to prove his/her proficiency in reading English, French at least as European languages, as well as one of the languages of the Middle East and North Africa among Arab, Iranian or Turkish.

During month 1, the candidate and the tutor will first select the case study after a first review of the existing literature on the topic, and on the basis of the assessment of the real, effective possibility to conduct archival and field research in the country concerned. From months 2 to 9, he/she will expand and deepen the literature review and prepare for the research missions abroad. Then, he/she will collect archival documents concerning the case study, as well as all other sources available, like oral interviews and data from statistical databases. From months 9 to 12, the candidate will complete the analysis of the documents and literature, he/she participate to international scientific conferences and workshops in order to debate his/her preliminary results, as well as he/she will submit an article to scientific journals or a chapter in an edited book. The schedule of the activities might change upon research circumstances and opportunities available, always in respect for the final results.

Pending on the approval of the scientific tutor, the candidate might also participate to teaching activities within the limits of 60hrs of frontal lectures and seminars at the University of Bologna. At the same conditions, the candidate might hold research and teaching activities outside the University of Bologna, too.