Introduction

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CHAPTER 1

Development as a Battlefield

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Abstract

Conflict and development are commonly understood as two contradictory phenomena. Some apparently self-evident ideas, such as gaps in development being a source of conflict and social and political conflict being a major obstacle to development, have been revitalised by the debate about the Arab Spring and used to orient development projects in the MENA region. This chapter aims to explore a radically different perspective: we conceive development as a complex social relationship, involving a vast constellation of actors, interests, logics, spaces, causalities and temporalities, and we consider conflict in a multidimensional sense, as an expression of struggle, competition, tension, resistance, opposition and critique. Conceived in these terms, conflict and development appear to be strictly interlinked rather than opposites. Three particular configurations characterise development as a 'battlefield': conflicts that create consensus around development; consensus as an expression of conflict; and the definition of legitimate conflicts. There is special focus on the interconnection between different temporal layers characterising the formation of the state and the transformation of capitalism, and the consequences of development for society, the assertion of sovereignty, the definition of social order and how people conduct their lives. This examination of the links between development and conflict thus sheds fresh light on injustice, inequality, modes of government and on how people interpret and live in political society far beyond the MENA region.

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1 Introduction

Except for studies in anthropology or in historical and political sociology that focus on highly localised processes,[1] few recent analyses have examined the process of development in what is conventionally called the 'MENA' (Middle East and North Africa) region. After the Arab Spring, the first timid approaches to the subject in the late 1990s and the decade that followed[2] gave way to an almost exclusive preoccupation with conflict. After 2011, there were very few contributions dealing with this region in major journals devoted to development issues[3] and conflicts were discussed in terms of protests and social movements, especially in Tunisia and Egypt,[4] or in terms of armed conflicts and civil wars, especially regarding Syria and Libya.[5]

This analytical turn rests on a multiplicity of causally self-evident observations underpinning a rather widespread understanding of development and conflict, in which the two terms are presented as two contradictory phenomena. However, it is still difficult to provide an overview of the different ways in which the relationship between these two phenomena has been understood over time. If we take the view that the discontent, social movements, revolts and revolutions that the MENA region has experienced are in part born of gaps in development, including the existence of pockets of poverty, the inadequate integration of the region, and difficulties in getting young people into the

1 See, e.g., Elyachar (2005) on self-entrepreneurship in Cairo, Bono (2010) on the phenomena of participation in the Moroccan town of El Hajeb, and Canesse (2014) on rural development policy in the Tunisia of Ben Ali. Implemented between 2008 and 2011, the Agence Nationale de la Recherche (French National Research Agency) programme, 'Tanmia. Le "Développement": fabrique de l'action publique dans le monde arabe?" contributed to fostering studies on development in the region. The work produced in this context includes Catusse et al. (2010), Abu-Sada and B. (2011), Ruiz de Elvira (2013) and Sbeih (2014).

2 See in particular Santucci and El Malki (1990) and Henry and Springborg (2001). Note also the launch of the *Middle East Development Journal* in 2009.

3 For example, the *Journal of Development Studies* did not refer to any country in the region between volume 46–10 (November 2010) and volume 50–9 (September 2014). By not publishing any article referring to the Arab Spring after 2011, the *Middle East Development Journal* made a significant editorial decision. In the same trend, in 2011 the *Revue Tiers Monde* devoted a special issue to the conflicts and protest movements present in the region: see Ben Néfissa (2011).

4 Camau and Vairel (2014) and Rougier and Lacroix (2015) address the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, respectively, from this point of view.

5 This view of conflict is particularly central in Burgat and Paoli (2013). It also underlies the discussion of the role of ISIS (also known as Daesh and ISIL) in the Arab world expressed in Fellous (2015).

labour market, we are implicitly drawing on the presuppositions of theories of modernisation.[6] These theories see development as essentially pacificatory, as a vector of equality and justice and as promoting inclusiveness and the dissemination of economic rationality, and thus as alleviating conflict. In this evolutionary and 'progressivist' perspective, development—it is claimed—can lead a society towards greater prosperity and, consequently, towards greater equity, peace and consensus. According to this interpretation—adopted by the majority of donors,[7] the social conflicts facing the MENA region arise from the ineffectiveness of development when viewed as a vector of equality and from its unexpected negative effects. These analyses thus bolster the classic argument that various supposedly atavistic factors are hindering the development of countries in the region. These factors include merely cosmetic reforms and the limits of economic liberalisation in the face of the interests of rentiers, clientelism, and the importance of 'clans'; the constraining influence of religion on economic behaviour, especially on the integration of women; and the way that wealth is siphoned off into security apparatuses and sociopolitical groups linked to the government.[8]

The social conflicts that have proliferated in the wake of the Arab Spring have often been seen as further evidence of the conflictual and unstable nature of the societies in the region. Echoing this, 'reverse versions' of this interpretation have developed in the form of analyses aimed at defining the negative effects of conflict on development. From this point of view, conflict is seen as the main source of underdevelopment, or as an obstacle to the pursuit of the aims of development. Violence, especially in the form of civil wars, is then perceived as one of the main causes of poor economic performance and, even more, of the growth of poverty in the world.[9] Analyses sometimes focus on issues of conflict and then show that violence feeds economic strategies that run

6 Rostow (1960) is one of the main proponents of this school of thought. Gilman (2003) provides us with material for further reflection on the relationship between conflict and development in theories of modernization.

7 Among the most recent examples of this, see in particular the World Bank (2015) and USAID (2015).

8 Analyses that consider these characteristics as typical of the countries in the region go back several years. Among the first authors to highlight them were Gellner and Waterbury (1977) and later Heydemann (2004). After the Arab Spring, these arguments were at the heart of the various studies on the 'political economy of the Arab Spring', including Springborg (2011), Malik and Bassem (2013) and Cammett et al. (2015).

9 See in particular the World Bank (2005). This argument is developed analytically in North et al. (2013).

counter to development. All analyses of the 'greed and grievance'[10] kind that flourished in the second half of the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War and the 'renewal' of armed conflict, fall within this paradigm: thus, it is claimed that resources (natural resources, financial resources from international groups or organisations such as migrants, or humanitarian aid) are turned into weapons of war, strengthening not only the parties in conflict but also the murderous competition to appropriate these resources.[11] With the same self-assurance, other analysts take the opposite view and argue for example that the fact that Tunisia was the first country to revolt is not surprising, especially because it had a higher level of development than its neighbours—witness its demographics and the level of education of its population.[12] Others highlight the negative effects of the protests, outbreaks of violence and even civil wars on the region's development.[13]

These various arguments comprise a temporal and spatial sequence of supposedly 'self-evident' relationships that are, in fact opposed, or even contradictory and incompatible—a sequence made possible by the tangled interweaving of three simplistic modes of reasoning. The first is undoubtedly the adoption of very narrow conceptions of the two phenomena studied: the notion of development is understood in a limited and economistic sense, purportedly neutral and expressed in growth rates; the notion of conflict is reduced to war, physical violence or social protest.[14] The second mode of reasoning, transposed from the economy,[15] is based on the premise that development and conflict are independent of one another. This approach transforms these complex phenomena into 'variables', which makes it possible to seek patterns, and leads to the logics of development and of conflict being separated: there cannot be any overlap between a 'period of development' (characterised by a partial or complete absence of conflict) and a 'period of conflict' (which

10 The expression comes from Collier (2000a; 2000b). These arguments have also been developed in Jean and Rufin (1996), Kaldor (1999), and Collier and Hoeffler (2002; 2004).

11 Within the community of practitioners, these arguments have in particular been raised by the Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC, 1997).

12 See, e.g., Todd (2011).

13 See, e.g., Amin et al. (2012). The financial press and the grey literature from donors are full of articles or reports on the subject.

14 From another very interesting point of view, albeit almost the complete opposite of our own, Cramer (2006) shows that when conflicts are examined from the angle of development, they are reduced to what becomes an oversimplified reality.

15 Marchal and Messiant (2002; 2003) pioneered this critique.

in itself can hamper the process of development).[16] Finally, the third mode of reasoning, the causal mode reduced to its simplest expression,[17] sees the relationship between development and conflict as part of the search for *one* causality, *ceteris paribus*, but also as falling within a normative analysis that claims to set out good and bad practices, define good and bad development, perceive its failure or success and highlight its positive or negative, beneficial or adverse effects.[18]

Beyond the MENA region and the Arab Spring, these modes of argument underlie and promote expertise and development projects and their bureaucratisation. Thinking, within decision-making bodies (by their 'organic' intellectuals), has indeed been heavily oriented towards the quest for strategies aimed at 'breaking the conflict trap' and creating the necessary conditions for the sole (or main) purpose of fostering the positive effects expected from development.[19] The so-called conflict-sensitive approach and its 'do-not-harm' strategies[20] are based on these assumptions. They were all responsible for the exponential growth of various schemes that claimed to provide appropriate responses to these new issues in cooperation and development policy. Manuals and training guides devoted to these approaches provide a set of standards, procedures, *dispositifs* and instruments to neutralise the conflicts arising from development projects.[21] The extremely commonplace processes that have made it possible to design these technologies, to make them operational and reproducible, to rationalise them so that they can be assessed and to standardise them to make them compatible and comparable has turned into a process that

16 This argument lies at the heart of the World Bank's *World Development Report 2011* (Word Bank, 2011).

17 For a critical view of the link between development and security, see Duffield (2007) and the debate on his book in the periodical *Politique Africaine* (Ambrosetti et al., 2012).

18 See, e.g., Thomas et al. (2000).

19 See the eloquent title of the World Bank report (World Bank, 2003).

20 For these approaches, see Leonhardt (2002) and Anderson (1999). For a critical analysis, see Schloms (2005). These arguments have been mainly developed in the grey literature. See, for example, *The Collaborative for Development Action*, http://www.cdainc.com or http://territoires.ecoledelapaix.org/mali/methode-do-no-harm (accessed on 13 July 2016).

21 For example, Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (2012) See also the 'resource pack' of PFO, CECORE, CHA, FEWER: *International Alert, Saferworld, Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding. A Resource Pack*, http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/148-conflict-sensitive-approaches-to-development-humanitarian-assistance-and-peacebuilding (accessed on 13 July 2016).

produces indifference, one that has detached them from their very meaning. Paradoxically, this process has produced other forms of coercion and domination[22] that traditional readings of the link between development and conflict neglect or completely ignore.

The limits of these perspectives become evident as soon as one engages in a rigorous exploration of the meaning of the two terms. Instead of considering development as a one-dimensional explanatory variable, we felt it would be more productive to define it as a complex social relationship involving a vast constellation of actors, interests, logics, spaces, causalities and temporalities; a social relationship that necessarily gives rise to diverse understandings. Similarly, if we do not reduce conflict to civil war, protest movements and the explicit use of violence, it can appear as an expression of struggle, forms of competition, tensions, resistance, opposition and critique. By adopting these complex and multidimensional meanings, an examination of the links between development and conflict can shed fresh light on injustice, inequality and modes of government, but also on the ways people understand and exist in political society. Then, development cannot fail to foster simultaneously a number of trends and characteristics; of different and even contradictory interpretations. It thereby becomes a more deep-rooted factor in struggle, overt competition and the asymmetry of relations rather than an element in convergence, harmony and the pacification of social relations.[23]

By observing development in all its conflictual nature, we have—in the present volume— sought to transcend the aforementioned limits by integrating the logics of action and social relationships, which are considered to be offset and out of scope by normative, mono-causal arguments. The first of these limits concerns the relationship to time. Eschewing analyses that claim that the temporality of development and the temporality of conflict succeed one another, we have sought to understand the way they are interconnected by situating the analysis of these relationships within national and global trajectories. Giving them a historical setting has led us to understand, always in a contextualised and localised way, what exactly development means, comprehending it as a multiplicity of combinations of consensus and conflict—combinations that are not necessarily tense and paradoxical. By shifting the focus to the link between development and conflict thus defined, this volume also aims to question the relevance of the MENA region as a category of

22 These processes are highlighted and analysed, in other contexts, by Hibou (2015) and Samuel (2013; 2014).

23 Bono et al. (2015) argue for this view, drawing on Weber and his confrontational conception of social relations (Weber, 1968).

analysis, to the extent that it homogenises utterly different political situations and development practices.[24]

2 Understanding How Different Temporalities are Interconnected

The sceptical gaze we are bringing to bear on this overall understanding of the region does not stop us being sensitive to the existence of several major features common to the various entities that comprise it. These extraverted societies have continually brought their own historicity, including the nineteenth century reform movement—*islah*—into dialogue with the Western matrix of development that emerged at the same time. All these societies have been integrated, in their own ways, into the grand narrative of the nation that is inseparable from the processes of globalisation, and have participated daily in the transformations of modes of government that have shaped the great paradigms of intervention with regard to development. We, as editors, felt that this return to history was required, not to illustrate the evolutionary process to which development is often reduced, but to show the diversity and originality of configurations bringing together development and conflict over the years and to help us grasp the plurality of meanings of development and its conflictual dimensions in the neo-liberal era in which we are currently living. If we are to understand the interconnections of temporalities, we must not only take into account the link between global trajectory and national or regional trajectories; we must also consider the relationship between periods of development (with their specific conception of the state and ways of governing) and periods of great events in history (such as the fall of empires, the end of colonisation, the end of separatist nationalism after decolonisation, and the end of industrial development). And we also need to take into account the link between the 'long periods' of incremental transformations and periods of contingency and abrupt change, and the connection between the 'long periods' of the intrinsic logics of development and the equally long, but more specific, span of human memory.

Understanding the link between development and conflict requires first and foremost that we situate the historicity proper to the region within the process of globalisation, particularly in the related reconfiguration of international relations. In interpreting this phenomenon without resorting to analyses focused on the clash of civilisations, on imports (of the state, modernity, or

24 In line with the ideas put forward in Bayart (2016).

the market)[25] or on dependence,[26] this reading highlights the ambiguity and complexity of interactions between two global trajectories—that of countries in the region and that which structures international relations in the context of Western hegemony. In this way, it is possible to understand the specific ways in which the great geostrategic conflicts have daily shaped the ideas, *dispositifs* and practices of development in given societies.[27]

We need to go back to the eighteenth century to understand the process by which the models of 'Western' and 'Ottoman' (or more generally Muslim) modernity grew apart and then came into conflict, ending, in the nineteenth century, with the hegemonic self-assertion of the Western model. As Nora Lafi suggests in her contribution to this volume, the practices of development in the region in the late nineteenth century were not reducible to the Ottoman configuration or to the subtle and ambiguous relations between the Sublime Porte[28] and the provinces. To understand them, our analysis needs to take account of the tensions between this Ottoman configuration and the triumph of the European world, and of the violence fomented by the colonial ambitions of the major European nations, especially on the economic level. During the colonial period, this tension was reflected in the coexistence of convergences, affinities and encounters between these two modernities, but also in the open conflicts between them, for instance in matters of education, administrative reorganisation and economic investment, as evidenced by the discussions that took place within the colonised societies.[29] As the Moroccan example paradigmatically illustrates,[30] this tension can also be seen in the processes of the 'invention of tradition' and the appropriation of tradition. The link between the temporalities of development and conflict finds one of its international expressions in the operation of the bipolar world that emerged from the Cold War. In the case analysed by Anouck Côrte-réal Pinto, the 'Turkification' of the defence industry—used both as a lever of economic development and as a symbol of technological modernity—seems inseparable from the climate of permanent conflict characteristic of the Cold War. As a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), (and thus undoubtedly belonging

25 As shown by Huntington (1996) and Badie (1992), whose ideas have caused significant reverberations in the academic and political worlds.

26 In line with the work of Frank (1968), Cardoso and Faletto (1979) and Amin (1974).

27 This approach is based mainly on Wallerstein (1979), Lonsdale (1981), Cooper (1981), Bayart (1989) and Arrighi (1994).

28 The Sublime Porte was the name of the Ottoman court at Constantinople.

29 For Tunisia, see Berque (1967), Mahjoubi (1982), Tlili (1984), Kraïem (1990), Sraïeb (1995) and Ben Achour (1996). For an overview, see Hibou (2009).

30 On this aspect, see Adam (1972), Rabinow (1995), Tozy (1999) and Hibou (2006).

to the Western Bloc), Turkey has continuously tried to assert itself as a regional player by insisting on its 'non-aligned' importance vis-à-vis its allies. In the case of Afghanistan, as analysed in this volume by Fariba Adelkhah, this interconnection is reflected in the coexistence of the time of development imposed by Western powers through the assistance they have provided for reconstruction, and the time of 'war as life' that characterises national trajectory and creates conflicts conducive to the continuation of this permanent state of war. These two experiences of the neo-liberal moment do not, of course, exhaust the possible configurations of this crossing of trajectories.

Indeed, the plural and elastic dimension of what is called 'neo-liberalism' explains how a very wide variety of forms exist behind the general principles presiding over its operation (government by norms, procedures, rules and figures; the dissolution of the specificity of the 'public' and the universalisation of the private as a benchmark of government; the imperative to create frameworks for the development of market and business logics; the replacement of general laws by pragmatism and case-by-case decisions; the replacement of collective responsibility by individual responsibility, and so on). Thus, the areas covered in this volume suggest that the neo-liberal hegemony can be understood and interpreted in an open and pluralistic manner that goes beyond the standardising paradigm of development in which guise it usually appears.[31] These areas reveal direct forms of state interventionism and strategies of delegation, the development of evergetic and charitable practices on the part of private individuals and the redeployment of social policies, the mobilisation of associations and individuals in civil society and of large administrations, and the engineering of both participation and planning. Thanks to this plasticity and the existence of a multiplicity of ways of behaving and governing 'neo-liberally', each society offers a range of behaviours and conducts that can extend to the expression of radical alternatives and oppositions. Thus, consensus and conflict can exist simultaneously. In this sense, Merieme Yafout's article on the development activities implemented by Moroccan Islamist associations that thereby seek to criticise the action of the state in this area demonstrates clearly that models of society that in principle are completely opposed—which some observers might read as 'shocks' of civilisation, rekindling the opposition between East and West—can find in the neo-liberal development paradigm both common ground and a place of conflict or even

31 On the diversity of neo-liberal principles, see Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005), Nemo and Petitot (2006), Plehwe et al. (2006), Dardot and Laval (2013) and Peck (2010). On the diversity of neo-liberal practices, there are many studies, but see especially Laurie and Bondie (2005), Ong (2006), Chang et al. (2012) and Peck and Theodore (2015).

violence. The chapter by Adriana Kemp and Talia Margalit, on urban development projects in Tel Aviv, convincingly shows that any challenge to neo-liberal practices borrows from the very repertoire of the neo-liberal paradigm—a paradigm that it also helps to renew.

The link between development and conflict must then be read as part of the historical trajectory of the formation of states. In the region as elsewhere, conflicts mark out and comprise this trajectory and mark the transition between different conceptions of the role played by state authority in development in the imperial, colonial, national and neo-liberal eras.[32]

In the Tunisian fez sector in the late nineteenth century, as studied by Nora Lafi, the strategies deployed by the workers provide us with a concrete understanding of the tensions that existed at the time between the imperial government and foreigners' ambitions. The government aimed to foster the shift in the artisanal production of the Tunis *beylik* towards proto-industrialisation through economic and administrative reforms, while foreign actors, by introducing competition, further legitimised the process of mechanisation, quickly generating conflicts within corporations and the colonial state itself (in its role as an agent both of development and of protection in the sector). The demands for the introduction of trade union rights in Sudan after the Second World War—the theme of Elena Vezzadini's contribution to this volume—take us to the heart of two other 'conflictualities'. The first conflictuality contrasts the different conceptions of development found in the metropolis and reflects the transition from a colonial state that highlights the importance of, and exploits, its colony to a colonial state that empowers its colony and places it under its tutelage. The second conflictuality contrasts nationalists with the supporters of a developmentalist colonisation likely to provide the future independent state with its guiding principles.[33] Marie Vannetzel analyses the trajectory of the Egyptian state, which is emblematic of the developmentalist and interventionist nation state that involves itself in groups and territories in the name of national interest. She focuses her initial remarks on the ways in which the conflict between the government and the Muslim Brotherhood is managed. She then examines the ways in which the different parties mobilise this developmentalist imaginary in the heart of the neo-liberal period, a period that encourages us to examine and interpret the conflicts between the multiple conceptions of the role of the state in development. The various contributions to this volume highlight the diversity of 'what development means' when the state reforms itself in the name of neo-liberalism. It probably means

32 On these aspects, see especially Bayart (2010).

33 These contrasts are highlighted in Mitchell (1991) and Berman and Lonsdale (1992).

liberalising but also nationalising; it also means intervening directly and disinvesting in the name of rationality and competitiveness in the private sector; and, yet again, it means using intermediaries and drawing on unexpected convergences but also giving free rein to market forces. Yasmine Berriane illustrates this trend with the emblematic example of collective lands in Morocco. She shows that their commercialisation lies at the crossroads of several economic and social issues linked to gender conflicts within society but also to conflicts between different social groups and territories. Raphaëlle Chevrillon-Guibert highlights the regional asymmetry characteristic of development in Islamist Sudan, an asymmetry that has widened under the impact of the neoliberalism proper to that country—namely, the combination of institutional disinvestment and an increased reliance on the private sector in the form of incentives to resort systematically to charity.[34]

The analysis of the link between transformations in modes of government and transformations in capitalism constitutes a third approach to the link between development and conflict. Many studies have shown that, worldwide, development initiatives are indeed permeable to the major international economic paradigms, but that they do not submit passively to them: they participate in the process of the appropriation, adaptation and renewal of modes of government that are thus legitimised in the exercise of their domination.[35] Following this line of argument, the contributions in this volume highlight the innovative and inventive dimensions of this process, dimensions that are directly related to the specific characteristics of capitalism in historical configurations but also in specific national or regional forms.

In her article, Ayşe Buğra distinguishes between the development process and developmentalism defined as a strategy and as a legitimising discourse. She draws on the Turkish trajectory to uncover the process by which development becomes, in a given political situation, a knowledge of government, and shows how the shift from the paradigm of interventionist development to the paradigm of regulative development, privatised and decentralised, acquires particular and specific meaning in the capitalist configuration that characterises it. By encouraging the decentralisation of powers, favouring regulation over direct intervention and opting for the assessment of results rather than the planning of interventions, these neo-liberal modes of governing create new margins of

34 For similar analyses in other contexts, see Kuran (2003), Bonner et al. (2003), Haenni (2005) and Singer (2008).

35 On Africa, in particular see Ferguson (1990) and Hibou (1998). For a more general reflection on this aspect, see Hibou (2011).

ownership, negotiation and arrangement while renewing former practices.[36] As suggested by the example of the Casablanca Development Plan, analysed by Nadia Hachimi Alaoui, the neo-liberal revolution, especially in its managerial component, and the modes of government associated with the interests of the new players in Moroccan capitalism combine with the permanence of the imaginary but also with the Makhzen's practices of exercising power so as to create spaces for negotiation and moments conducive to action in areas that go far beyond development goals alone. By focusing on urban development in Tel Aviv, Adriana Kemp and Talia Margalit highlight another important feature of the current period. They show that those who are involved in development projects are not the only ones to provide guidance for the interpretation of government paradigms; protest and resistance also contribute to inventing, reformulating and legitimising these paradigms, partly because they are part of the same political economy and reflect the same capitalist configuration.

This extremely flexible reading of conflict defined as a social and political conflictuality, this approach sensitive to historical trajectories and their interconnections, is in the final analysis closer to studies that have addressed the history of development in terms of the singular narrative of endlessly reformulated expectations[37] than to studies on the political economy of development. The contributions in this volume may, to some degree, be read as fragments of narratives of development seen through the prism of conflictuality, allowing a very broad spectrum of social phenomena to be taken into account.

3 The Link between Development and Conflict

The contributions to this volume, then, form part of the historicity of globalisation, the formation of states, and the transformation of modes of government, and aim to grasp the links uniting these factors with periods of development and the connection between development and conflict. They capture the multiple faces of development and modes of conflict these faces convey, and they come at the problem from many different angles and scales of observation. For example, it is possible to reconstruct this variety of facets (with their different scales) by examining the vernacular terms, local translations and synonyms used in specific situations to talk about development, but also the words often associated with them, albeit in a great variety of ways. This richness better reflects the complexity of the relationship between development and conflict;

36 This aspect is also addressed by Hibou (2015) and Samuel (2013).

37 This is, in particular, the point of view of Cooper (2010) and Eckert et al. (2010).

we can move away from abstract and general analysis to observe the way development becomes an 'everyday' feature[38] through what it means in concrete terms. This volume focuses specifically on this phenomenon, examining the consequences of development for the organisation of social life, the assertion of sovereignty, the definition of social order and the shaping of how one conducts one's life.[39]

To analyse development and the conflicts that may arise from it in everyday life, it is thus appropriate firstly to analyse the reorganisation of social life in accordance with a state model favouring continuity or territorial stability, the ethnic uniformity of the population, the primacy of the individual over the group and competition between individuals. By analysing international aid as a *dispositif* and as a form of knowledge of a region (in this case Bamyan, in Afghanistan), Fariba Adelkhah shows that development can trigger a process of 'ethnicisation' and religious 'confessionalisation' among those participating in the political economy of aid, but also a process of territorialisation and therefore the affirmation of specific identities. Her contribution suggests that aid for development does not necessarily succeed conflict, even when it is intended to support the reconstruction of a region. Instead, it allows conflicts to be perpetuated beyond open warfare by supplying them with resources and providing them with a grammar. This grammar of development transforms the conflicts that had once been expressed in a warlike manner by giving them a diffuse and plural nature, albeit one that is not necessarily less cruel. This is shown by the exacerbation of violence connected with disputes over land, ethnicity and gender. The micro-social angle chosen by Yasmine Berriane allows us to observe a process of this nature embodied by the Soulaliyate movement. This movement arose in Morocco following the intensification of the commodification of collective land formerly owned by the tribes, and is led by women fighting against their exclusion from the process of the distribution of profits from the sale of these lands. Yasmine Berriane shows that the grand idea of development can also lead to the satisfaction of crassly pecuniary demands; in particular, she notes that development initiatives are likely to intensify social inequalities through an asymmetric enhancement of the territory and the 'tribalisation' of the individuals who inhabit it. Implicitly, the Soulaliyate movement reflects the fact that different land requirements may also create

38 Weber's *Veralltäglichung* is not translated here as it is usually rendered ('routinization') but as 'mode of penetration in everyday life', following Grossein's French translation (*quotidianisation*) and interpretation. See Grossein 2006: 68; 123–124.

39 This problematisation was developed by Weber: see especially Weber (1971) and Chalcraft, D.J., and A. Harrington (eds) (2001).

antagonisms between town and country, between different farming methods, and also between different social strata. Raphaëlle Chevrillon-Guibert analyses the charitable practices implemented by Darfuri traders in the Libya souk in Khartoum to benefit their region of origin. Without international aid and social policies, the traders' charitable activities have become the main pillar of territorial development and the fight against famine in Darfur, as in Khartoum. By transforming charity into the 'government of the social',[40] these initiatives undoubtedly reinforce the civilisation project fostered by the Islamist government. But they also contribute to the ethnicisation and the 'communitarisation' of solidarity—the complete opposite of Islamist rhetoric. Thus, amid the perpetuation of the war in Darfur, conflicts occur between different generations of wealthy traders, but also between antagonistic clienteles, social groups and territories that are all competing to qualify for aid.

This volume also approaches the links between development and conflict by analysing the implications that development initiatives have had for the emergence of a sovereign political authority and the sometimes conflictual modes of the assertion, exercise and legitimation of sovereignty in a given society. The spectrum and variety of viewpoints chosen by the authors highlight the characteristics of developmental conflicts in a specific period and the impact these conflicts have on how sovereignty is conceived. By studying the late Ottoman period, Nora Lafi captures the effects of development on the processes of affirmation and legitimation of political authority. The petitions denouncing the collapse of the fez industry in the Ottoman province of Tunis called into question the validity of integration into international trade as a mode of development. The protest against international competition viewed as unfair and against the deteriorating living conditions of workers following the mechanisation of the sector also denounced a new form of foreign interference and domination and criticised an Ottoman rule that, in the view of artisans, had become an agent of globalisation. Conflicts between the centre of the empire and the provinces, as well as conflicts between the various economic interests in the Tunisian province being studied, combined with conflicts with European powers to pave the way to colonisation and the loss of sovereignty.

At the other chronological extremity of the colonial experience, Elena Vezzadini's study of Sudan highlights the comparable disputes over sovereignty that can arise during national struggle. Immediately after the Second World War, the earliest legislation on employment was introduced under the leadership of the nascent Sudanese trade union movement and the developmentalist

40 For our conception of the government of the social, we refer the reader to our previous work, especially Hibou and Bono (2016).

orientation of the colonial power, influenced by the Keynesian paradigm that prevailed in England at the time. In a colonial context, the fact that the development model took into account the right to employment paved the way for an interpretation of development as a matter of citizenship, sovereignty and sociopolitical order. Thus, alongside the nationalist conflict that would give birth to a sovereign Sudanese government in 1956, there was a real proliferation of conflicts between different levels of government, different generations of employees, but also between various components of the nationalist movement, different ethnic groups and different economic interests. By reconstructing the trajectory of the Turkish defence industry during and after the Cold War, Anouck Gabriela Côrte-réal Pinto views the issue of sovereignty from a different angle. The official defence policy of the public authorities and the almost continuous (but still incomplete and perhaps impossible) promotion of the 'Turkification' of the military–industrial complex were presented at once as an example, a proof and a precondition of the country's economic, technological and political development. These investments were a pillar of the exercise of national sovereignty: lying at the heart of government legitimacy for decades, they undoubtedly supported government action aimed at defusing conflict with opposition movements. Moreover, they allowed recognition of the survival of the state and the nation, and underpinned the power and greatness of a country anxious to assert itself on the international stage in the name of a conflict forever on the verge of breaking out. The Turkish word *kalkınma* masterfully expresses this idea, since it includes the meaning of development, but also that of recovery and healing. To some extent, the graduated reading (more or less, better or worse) of development evolved into a binary reading (the life or death of the state) that forcefully enacted a consensus against a background of conflict.

Analysis of the daily implications of development also allows us to observe the characteristics of the sociopolitical order that is shaped through it.[41] At this level, conflicts of development may also set different actors, groups with conflicting interests, and conflicting world views against one another. In a Gramscian perspective, different world views, which coexist in an incoherent, disjointed and fragmentary manner, are the source of a continuous reformulation of the assumptions that discipline the way people live together through the conflicts they can trigger.[42] This third perspective in this volume is based

41 A study by Ayşe Buğra (2007), who considers this issue from the viewpoint of unequal practices of citizenship, is particularly useful for developing this perspective.

42 This is one of the central ideas in Gramsci (2011). On the concept of dislocation in Gramsci's thought, see Prestipino (2009).

on the work of Gramsci but also on other authors such as Polanyi (1944). Ayşe Buğra proposes that we must define economics as a discipline and as a form of knowledge if we are to grasp the way these different levels of conflict are interrelated in Turkey. She shows that the discourse on development fosters a socio-economic order of progress, modernisation and social cohesion and encompasses economic policies that have been created by different and sometimes opposed theories. However, as a historically and ideologically situated form of knowledge, conflict is expressed not only in its theoretical or ideological form. By analysing the economic development strategies promoted in Turkey before and after the country's integration into the world market, it is possible to understand the territorial, ethnic and class divisions within Turkish society and the mainsprings of the political order that accompanied social conflicts, especially those targeting Armenians and traditional rural society before liberalisation and, more recently, the conflicts that have set the secular urban elites against the new elites emerging from political Islam.

The development strategy in Casablanca as analysed by Nadia Hachimi Alaoui is emblematic of a sociopolitical order based on private initiative, territorial competition and the devolution of power in the name of proximity. Through various initiatives based on participation and consultation, the shapes assumed by notions of development seem so imprecise that development may act as an instrument of government and domination, despite the conflicts between different levels of political authority and between different economic interests. These conflicts, played out in non-formal areas on the edges of the development plan, have shaped the sociopolitical order that characterises Casablanca today, emphasising an apolitical vision of development, technicising it by expertise, excluding elected figures from consultations while integrating them into non-formal spaces of negotiation and giving the *wali*[43] the status of a major player in development. The city is also the level of observation chosen by Adriana Kemp and Talia Margalit to study the conflicts that development brings about in shaping modes of government and the sociopolitical order. Complementing previous analyses, Kemp and Margalit show that protests against the construction of high-rise buildings in Tel Aviv highlight issues of social cohesion and the public interest of urban development. By targeting only the partial and limited aspects of urban planning choices, these movements, often perceived as anti-neo-liberal (and viewing themselves as such), do not resist the neo-liberalism of urban space and the sociopolitical order but rather play a full part in them. Diffuse conflicts over funding for public services and the privatisation of urban space arise behind the disputes

43 A *wali* is a state representative at the territorial level. See Hachimi Alaoui (2016).

between the promoters of urban projects and their detractors, without challenging the neo-liberal order.[44]

Following Weber, the authors of the chapters in this volume also reflect the fact that development can be a vector of the expression and construction of 'the ways in which one conducts one's life' and how they characterise different 'types of person'.[45] The multiplicity of 'material and thought-based interests' that these concepts foster may result in cohabitation, confrontation or sometimes even in opposition between different ways of behaving and conceiving of the lives of individuals in society. The 'constellation' of interest, logics and behaviours that development brings together does not presuppose the existence of a spontaneous and peaceful harmony but of permanent adjustments resulting from conflicts, antagonisms, struggles, competitiveness and asymmetrical relations that lead to the emergence of different, sometimes even antagonistic worlds and world views.[46] In this fourth and final perspective, the authors have often chosen Islamist movements as a starting point for exploring the links between development and conflict. Marie Vannetzel and Merieme Yafout, respectively, study the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Wal Ihsane movement in Morocco using different scales of observation. Marie Vannetzel focuses on the continuity of the developmentalist imaginary before and after the fall of Mubarak and on the tensions between the imaginaries and the practices of development that have resulted. Merieme Yafout, meanwhile, examines a particular district in Casablanca, analysing the activities promoted by a development association whose female members are supporters of the Al Adl Wal Ihsane movement. In the case of Egypt, development is problematised through the distribution of benefits and the fostering of the spirit of service, while in the case of Morocco, it is understood as a process of emancipation and construction of 'ways in which one conducts one's life' based on positive personal social, economic and spiritual development. Going beyond the supposed existence of a conflict between a secular and an Islamic way of development (an idea systematically used in political speeches, in the community of development practitioners and in public debates), it is possible to highlight much more subtle conflicts between those two convictions, which are not rigid

44 The way in which protest movements have contributed to the consolidation of the neo-liberal order in Israel has already been stressed in connection with microfinance by Kemp and Berkovitch (2013). For a general discussion of this process in the neo-liberal era, see Hibou (2015). Theoretically, this process had already been emphasized by Weber (1978).

45 See especially Weber (1971) and Chalcraft, D. J., and A. Harrington (eds) (2001).

46 This problematic, which we adopted in order to analyse the government of the social in Morocco (Bono and Hibou 2016), is developed by Weber (1968). See Grossein (2005; 2016).

but constantly changing and evolving and continue to redeploy themselves through concrete ways of living in society.

4 Recognising the Coexistence of Consensus and Conflict on the Battlefield of Development

Development thus appears at once as a discourse, a practice, an ideology, a paradigm, a *dispositif*, a fiction and a power relationship. More importantly, the chapters of this volume point out that the meaning of development as a social action cannot fail to be historical and cultural. If they highlight national and regional differences, they also illustrate the reality of globalisation and its ideological and cultural hegemonies. Development appears as a relevant indicator of the degree of globalisation of the MENA region, where the political situation is all too often analysed as specific or exceptional. Each chapter places national experiences back in the context of a trajectory conditioned by generalising, global paradigms. Conceptions of development are not identical, and their links to conflict are not only plural but undefined and unstable. Once we abandon an abstract and general standpoint and instead observe development in its day-to-day form, the richness of this approach gives us a better understanding of the complexity of the relationship between development and conflict.

Beyond these variations, there appears one common feature: development helps build a consensus inseparable from the expression of conflicts. This becomes merely an apparent rather than a real paradox once we rid ourselves of simplistic visions of consensus. In the Weberian and Gramscian perspective adopted here, the convergence of norms, practices and interests is not the result of an intentional action or of supposed harmony, nor does it arise from a sharing of values, conceptions or meanings.[47] Instead, the multiplicity of perspectives and understandings, the differences of interests, and the plurality of logics of action feed into a continuous reformulation of the implicit factors that allow people to live together, precisely through the conflicts they are forever triggering. From this perspective, the distinction between developers and the developed—like that between rulers and those ruled and between the dominant and the dominated—is of little interest if our aim is to grasp the relationship between development and conflict: any active player is part of a

47 We develop this argument at length in Bono and Hibou (2016), drawing on Weber (1968 and 1971) and Gramsci (2011).

world view in which development is constructed as a consensual subject, while helping to preserve this conception, to modify it, and to create new ones.[48]

On the basis of shared beliefs and imaginaries, development presents itself as an indisputable fact.[49] At least two factors help explain this consensus. First, economic forms of knowledge of development tend to be considered as technical, objective and independent. This stance is based on the fiction that the economic sphere is independent of all political processes and able to regulate itself. The consensual nature of development stems partly from the way in which initiatives undertaken in its name are usually constructed and planned using tools that are intended to be technical and neutral in order to intervene on problematics themselves considered as objective. By questioning the objectivity of development, we recognise that it can be a place for the expression of subjectivity, values and ethics. Similarly, the fact that major development paradigms are legitimised internationally and that the expertise that accompanies them is often foreign—when aid itself is not directly foreign—helps give development an apparent neutrality that facilitates consensus. By questioning the neutrality of foreign intervention, we recognise that development can have different meanings in specific political situations. Second, the link forged between development and imaginaries of modernisation, progress and rationality also contributes to establishing this consensus: development is unanimously considered a desirable objective. Beyond the positive moral connotations generally associated with development, we need to carefully consider the processes of prioritisation and interests as well as the inequalities and asymmetries that any development initiative brings with it. By choosing as a case study 'development conflicts', we wanted to focus our reflection on the 'frictions'[50] that any experience of development generates. This stance has enabled us to simultaneously take into account the different conflicts and different kinds of understanding and apprehension of development and the consensus constructed around them, while defining development as a 'battlefield' on which prioritisation, discrimination and, ultimately, processes of domination are played out.[51] The situations analysed in the various chapters of this

48 On the multiple meanings of the subject in the processes of government, see also the reading of Foucault's conception of 'governmentality' in globalization proposed by Bayart (2007).

49 These issues are addressed in Rist (2002) and Cooper (2010).

50 On problematisation in terms of friction, see Tsing (2004).

51 For the same approach as applied to the government of the social, see Hibou and Bono (2016).

volume have helped to highlight three configurations that have structured this special volume.

The first part, entitled 'Conflicts that Create Consensus', brings together a series of articles that show in particular that disputes relating to the organisation of social life, the assertion of sovereignty, the definition of a social order or the construction of 'the ways in which one conducts one's life' contribute to creating a consensus on development, or at least to reinforcing it. Conflicts are necessary for a certain conception of development to become hegemonic. Hegemony, as Gramsci says, is born of conflicts and perpetuates itself through them.[52] To understand these conflicts, it is necessary to try and grasp power and domination relationships without limiting oneself to the concepts of coercion and the exercise of physical force and to give all necessary attention to the mechanisms that allow values and interests to be considered as *true and natural*, even though they are based on discriminatory and hierarchical processes. From this perspective, the point of transition between different hegemonic paradigms of development is a propitious moment at which to observe how conflicts build consensus. By studying, respectively, the assertive phase of neo-liberal developmentalism in Turkey and the role of industrialisation in the modernisation of the Ottoman province of Tunis, Ayşe Buğra and Nora Lafi show that the conflicts that accompany the shift from one consensus to another are related to the processes of 'creative destruction'[53] that punctuate the transformations of capitalism. Examining the case of Sudan as it achieved independence, Elena Vezzadini places less emphasis on the role of internal transformations within capitalism than on the paradigms that connect capitalism with the struggle for the establishment of an independent, modernising nation state. Finally, Merieme Yafout stresses the importance of laissez-faire and disengagement in the assertion of consensus with regard to a hegemonic vision of development in Morocco.

The articles in the second part—entitled 'Consensus as An Expression of Conflict'—highlight various examples of consensus with regard to development as a quintessential expression of tensions and conflicts that go well beyond such development. Indeed, development is never the work of a single group of actors who take the initiative. It should be understood as the result of a web of relationships and a constellation of social actions carried out by a variety of actors rather than as an explicit public policy that is definite, focused and unambiguous (a vision characteristic of analyses of conventional public

52 See Gramsci (2011). The analysis of Gramsci's terminology in Frosini and Liguori (2004) highlights this aspect.

53 To use the terminology proposed by Schumpeter (2010).

policies). Beyond the theme of brokers and intermediaries, it is important to consider the actors by whom development is furthered and interpreted—those who give it its colour and meaning, thanks to their style, ethos and modes of behaviour. In other words, one cannot understand the practical and conflictual dimensions of development without taking into account those people whom Weber called the 'bearers' of development.[54] By considering them in all their diversity, it is possible to observe the process by which their consensual actions vis-à-vis development can become the main field of expression for conflicts: these are embodied in the various conceptions of the common good, of the public interest and of development as well as in the many modes in which these objectives can be achieved, modes linked to different conceptions of the state and the exercise of power. Consensus about development can thus be a vector for the perpetuation and exacerbation of conflicts, as in the Afghan province of Bamyan, analysed in this volume by Fariba Adelkhah. Conversely, in their analysis of protests against urban projects in Tel Aviv, Adriana Kemp and Talia Margalit show that conflicts can paradoxically express a consensus. And consensus can also conceal conflicts of networks, power and temporality, such as those expressed in the implementation of the development plan for the city of Casablanca, studied by Nadia Hachimi Alaoui. Marie Vannetzel, finally, gives us another vision of this relationship between consensus and conflict by showing that in Egypt, for several decades, the whole machinery of development harboured conflicts of position between the nationalist elite and the Muslim Brotherhood; this machinery came to halt when conflict gave way to the triumph of one of the parties involved.

The third part, entitled 'The Definition of Legitimate Conflicts', addresses the theme of this volume from the vantage point of the contribution of development initiatives to the apprehension of questions of legitimacy. Development cannot be neutral if it is to avoid being ineffective. It does not appear here in the naive, technical, apolitical and sanitised guise that is often associated with it, but is presented as a targeted and thus inegalitarian social action (even if the targeting is extremely broad), an action that favours certain objectives and priorities over others, even if these are all numerous and contradictory. Development is by definition an action that differentiates and discriminates, often in the name of the war on inequality.[55] It is nonetheless a social action that influences processes of legitimation by modifying the representations of the state, of political space, and of social justice. The conflictual dimension of

54 Weber (1971), as highlighted by Grossein (2006).

55 Bono (2014) has analysed in these terms the construction of the 'responsible indigent' and the 'employable young person' as target categories for development aid to Morocco.

development is evident in the way its results are assessed, its inequalities are grasped, and the injustices it fosters are managed; but also in the way the violence inherent in any social action is fully taken into account. The neo-liberal consensus on development defined as a process of modernisation, reform and market expansion can then lead to the drawing of a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate conflicts, as suggested by Yasmine Berriane in her analysis of the commodification of collective lands in Morocco. In the case of Sudan, Raphaëlle Chevrillon-Guibert highlights the fact that the constitutive asymmetries of consensus regarding development can also generate conflicts. Anouck Côrte-réal Pinto, in turn, draws on the case of Turkey to remind us that it is essential to understand the means by which the national-liberal consensus underlying the developmentalist fiction makes conflicts acceptable, tolerable, marginal or even legitimate.

In our view, this threefold perspective contributes to the renewal of approaches usually adopted by studies in the social sciences to interpret the sociopolitical and economic situation in the MENA region.

First, this perspective undermines the idea that these countries are exceptions to the rule. This idea comes in different forms, including that of the ungovernability of the region's societies. The intrinsic contrast between the state and the population—related to the extraneous nature of the former and the indiscipline of the latter, or to the fact that state actors are detached from social processes—explains, it is said, the alternation of periods of submission and revolt, and makes these societies ungovernable.[56] The study by Adriana Kemp and Talia Margalit, and Ayşe Buğra's contribution to this volume, suggest that the neo-liberal moment cannot be reduced to a contrast between the state and society. Instead, they highlight a hegemony that underlies the conflicts and brings together ways of ruling and ways of opposing the rulers. In other words, neo-liberal practices form a common basis for the deployment of relations, interests and processes in which conflict and consensus, domination and resistance, inclusion and exclusion are interwoven. The idea that these countries are exceptions to the rule is also reflected in the way their markets are viewed as imperfect. This argument, often developed in terms of the economies of rent—particularly in the case of oil-producing countries and those that live by the exploitation of other natural or geopolitical resources, licit or illicit—is based on a historicist reading of the evolution of these countries and the idea that imperial and colonial experiences have imposed limits on the

56 For example, see Salamé (1994), Waterbury (1994) and Ayubi (1996). Those analyses that aim to establish the winner of the showdown between the state and civil society share this vision: see for example Fernández Molina (2011).

market economy.[57] Nora Lafi, Elena Vezzadini, Yasmine Berriane, and Anouck Gabriela Côrte-réal Pinto challenge this interpretation, and put forward three counterarguments: the inherently indigenous nature of the market, the importance of national movements in its appropriation and the ongoing process of reinvention that it is currently undergoing, for instance by the gradual placement of 'fictitious commodities' on the market.[58] Finally, the chapters in this volume offer an implicit critique of this idea of 'exceptionality' in the urban setting. With some significant exceptions, the literature on cities in the MENA region suggests that these are affected only marginally, and passively, by globalisation.[59] Nadia Hachimi Alaoui, Adriana Kemp, and Talia Margalit show instead that analyses on an urban scale allow for a detailed reading of the interrelationship between the space of the city and globalisation.

Second, this threefold perspective relativises and even undermines the idea that Islam and the strength of feeling inherent in ethnic identity act as barriers to development. In line with the theories of modernisation, it claims that Islam and ethnicity are based on values and beliefs incompatible with modernity, rationality and technical development.[60] Moreover, the low level of development supposedly fuels the rise of political Islam and the persistence of ethnicity.[61] The contributions of Merieme Yafout, Mary Vannetzel, Raphaëlle Chevrillon, and Anouck Gabriela Côrte-réal Pinto suggest the existence of different links between development and political Islam. They show that political Islam 'ordinarily' uses strategies of extraversion and fashionable international rhetoric and argue that it has thus become just as 'developmentalist' as secular political trends and plays a part in the neo-liberal paradigm as much as do other political movements. These authors also defend the view that religious reference points are an alternative source of legitimacy for new elites and enable the creation of new alliances that depoliticise inequality in the name of Muslim solidarity.[62] By exploring the reinvention of ethnicity and social and political bonds that has been produced by the processes of development, Fariba Adelkhah and

57 See in particular Beblawi and Luciani (1987), Richards and Waterbury (1996) and Henry and Springborg (2001).

58 This is the view of Polanyi (1944).

59 Authors who oppose this trend include Yacobi (2009) and Peraldi and Tozy (2011). For a critical analysis of this literature in the context of the Arab Spring, see Allegra et al. (2013).

60 The questioning of the relationship between Islam and modernity is a theme treated by Lewis (2003) and more recently by Masud et al. (2009).

61 Kepel's work (2003; 2006) rests on the idea that Islamism is a monolithic bloc whose birth was mainly due to an alliance between a deprived younger generation and a pious bourgeoisie.

62 Following Haenni (2005) and Tozy and Hibou (2015).

Yasmine Berriane also address the relationship between ethnicity and development in a new way. The conception of the role and place of women in Muslim or Mediterranean societies is often mentioned in this literature as another impediment to development.[63] Yasmine Berriane and Merieme Yafout address gender issues from a very different angle and show that women participate in the renewal of power relations within political movements and, moreover, that their positions as women contribute to legitimising certain struggles (and thus to delegitimising many others) and to the inclusion of certain actors (and thus to the exclusion of certain others).

Finally, looking at development via the connection between conflict and consensus allows us to see anew the issue of violence in the region.[64] These different approaches invite us to think about violence on the basis of the constitutive asymmetries of society rather than examining it frontally as a separate phenomenon; these asymmetries are considered as the normal and commonplace components of political relations and the exercise of power and not as features found only in the countries of the MENA region. Ultimately, many of our stances converge on a deconstruction of the concept of the MENA region defined as a well-delineated cultural and geopolitical area or as a homogeneous ensemble characterised by common trends in development.[65] By favouring one situated moment (the neo-liberal moment) and developing our argument on the basis of specific locations (geographic, but also sectoral, economic and cultural locations), this volume explores common conceptions of the region from a new angle so as to highlight the diversity of development patterns and thus the possible links between development and conflict. Multiplying disciplinary approaches—from history to political economy via anthropology and political sociology—we have abandoned a purely geographical or regional framework to adopt one that encompasses the relationship between global and local dimensions, including necessarily local perspectives on globalisation. Development is not analysed here as an explanatory variable or as an inevitable consequence, much less as revealing a stabilised 'culture' or the 'nature' of societies. It is defined as a set of complex social relations and a balance of power, oscillating constantly between consensus and conflict, a definition that highlights the extreme diversity of the situations observed.

63 This argument is omnipresent in the grey literature and in public debate. Various scholarly analyses and popular books have attempted to move beyond these stereotypes; Mernissi (1987) and Kandiyoti (1991) are among the first of these.

64 For a history of violence in the region, see Bozarslan (2008).

65 Our implicit critique of thinking in terms of 'cultural areas' draws on the analysis of this topic explicitly developed by Jean-François Bayart (2016).

This is what prompted us to put together this volume by taking the liberty of not remaining faithful to the boundaries conventionally attributed to this cultural area and not seeking regularities, convergences or divergences. Algeria, Libya, Syria, and Jordan are not among the countries studied, but we provide analyses of certain political situations often left on the margins or outside the supposed boundaries of the region, including Turkey and Afghanistan for ethnic reasons, Sudan for geographical reasons and Israel for religious and historical reasons. As the reader will have realised, the MENA region has been—for us—simply a pretext; a concrete place to think in general and generic terms of development as a 'battlefield'.[66]

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66 This eloquent phrase is obviously borrowed from Enzo Traverso (2012), whose approach, combining the history of ideas, the history of practices and the history of contexts, has inspired us.

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