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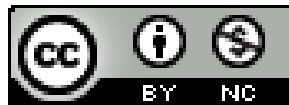
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Authoritarianism in Morocco: The ‘Developmental State’ without State Development

Nabil Zegaoui

Abstract

Development and authoritarian rule are often viewed as a contradiction in terms, but Morocco exemplifies their confluence in the framework of what could be called ‘authoritarian development’, wherein democracy is divorced from the process and practice of development. This paper examines the contradictory, rocky development path of the Moroccan state. While the state sets the rhythm for the development of society, it itself is impervious to development. As a result, development is a piecemeal practice, confined to the economic and social spheres while neglecting the political sphere, which consequently brings lower positive yields from development. The paper also examines the authoritarian nature of the Moroccan developmental model in light of modernisation theory and developmental authoritarianism, guided by the theory of competitive authoritarianism. It shows that the constraints on citizens’ economic and social empowerment are largely attributable to the fact that the political transformation of the state has been excluded as a possibility. The paper finds that the form of development in Morocco constitutes an extension of political authoritarianism and that the latter is responsible for the failure of economic and social development, concluding that political development geared to dismantling authoritarianism is a prerequisite for the development of the state.

Keywords: Morocco; development; authoritarianism; democracy; political economy

Introduction

Development is often described as a special pursuit of undemocratic countries that are ‘lagging’ behind others. Recently, development has become the focus of public attention in such countries, preoccupying citizens and decision-makers alike. The study and analysis of the state’s role in development touches on three central aspects of the development process: political development, which defines the scope of a country’s political system, and economic and social development, which constitutes the framework through which the necessary resources are mobilised to produce

goods and services that respond to the demands of individuals and groups in the political system. It should be noted that in this study, the term ‘development’ does not refer to partial development within specific sectors or fields, but rather national development in its broadest sense, encompassing political, social, and economic dimensions.

Development and authoritarian governance are often seen as incompatible, but in Morocco they are integrated into what could be called ‘authoritarian development’, which entails divorcing development from democracy. As this study attempts to elaborate on this thesis, its task is not to diagnose the level of development in Morocco based on the relevant indicators and metrics. Rather, its main concern is to unpack the dynamics of state decision-making and implementation on development.

The state plays an essential role in planning and steering development. The state’s stewardship of development is the backdrop against which development decisions take shape, based on experiences from other countries where states have made great developmental strides. Yet, the Moroccan state seems to have misread the real development breakthroughs that have taken place elsewhere: although it wants to match these countries’ achievements, having expressed its ambition to join the bloc of emerging economies, it chooses not to follow the strategies that led to higher levels of development.

It could be that emerging countries have taken a different trajectory than Morocco because they began their journey at different points in time. Even if some of these countries did achieve economic and social development under closed authoritarian regimes, at a later stage, they embarked on political liberalisation. In contrast, Morocco is unevenly engaged in both processes, seemingly unable to chart a new, viable path. While economic and social development and political reform theoretically hover on the horizon, they remain just out of sight in the seemingly interminable transitional phase, which may hinder the processes that lead to actual development.

In light of the foregoing, this paper examines the rocky, contradictory developmental arc of the Moroccan state. The state sets the rhythm for economic and social development but defies any movement towards state development. As a result, development is fragmented, confined to the economic and social realms while the political sphere is disregarded, which entails diminished developmental returns.

The thesis of this paper thus runs counter to the literature on development in Morocco, which tends to adopt more atomistic approaches, for example by taking a constitutional legal approach to the right to development,¹ or addressing a single dimension of development or two at best.² This study not only links the dimensions of development to each other, it argues that the three dimensions are necessarily entwined, thereby illuminating the grey area of the relationship between the state and development.

Methodologically, the paper examines the authoritarian nature of the Moroccan development model, adopting a theoretical framework that draws on modernisation theory and the theory of developmental authoritarianism and their approach to the relationship between development and democracy. In seeking to understand the relationship between authoritarian rule and development, the paper is also guided by the theory of competitive authoritarianism, which looks

at the structure of authoritarian or hybrid regimes and posits that they employ democratic mechanisms in order to control the levers of power. The paper hypothesises that the Moroccan case is unique in that it does not simply combine development and authoritarianism, but puts development itself in the grip of authoritarian practice.

Theoretical Framework: The Dialectic of Development and Authoritarianism

As a necessary increase in life necessities, development cannot be reduced to either economic growth or the well-being and welfare of the population. There are thus numerous, multidimensional indicators and concepts associated with development. What concerns us here is to clarify the relationship between development and the state, identifying the dimensions of this relationship and the interplay between them.

At the outset, it should be noted that the concept of development has shifted since it first emerged after the Second World War. Where once it was conceived as a response to the problem of developmental delay, it has evolved into a ‘focus on economic growth and its achievement’,³ whereby ‘social progress was supposed to be achieved through economic gains’.⁴ In economic theories, this perspective has limited the role of the state in development to simply ensuring market freedom.

The experience of capitalist societies in both distant and recent past, however, indicates that development cannot be achieved by relying solely on market forces; state intervention is required. The role played by the state in correcting inequitable growth—sector-based, geographic, and social—thus cannot be considered marginal in any way.⁵ The recognition that human beings, as individuals and groups, are the objects and *raison d’être* of development would lead to a greater focus on the non-economic aspects of development and an emphasis on the social and political dimensions and the role of the state in development. In this context, the concept of development has become central to the work of theorists of social and political change in the Global South. For political sociologists, for example, it is ‘a causal factor in their analyses of changing political systems and state institutions in Latin America’.⁶

Theories of development that address the economic problems of developing countries suggest that there is no need to emulate the development model of the Global North. Whereas in the latter countries, economic and social development was a result of political development,⁷ in developing countries it can be achieved in reverse order. In approaching development in these countries, comprehensive human development is the most appropriate perspective, meaning ‘not only achieving a high rate of economic growth, but also achieving economic justice and equality, eliminating hunger and disease, achieving economic independence and freedom from the constraints of economic dependence, and expanding political freedoms and democracy’.⁸

While the conditions of countries of the Global South do not require states to stop intervening in economic activity so much as review the forms and methods of their interventions,⁹ the problematic issue is that of an undemocratic state spearheading development. In other words, until the developmental transition is completed—that is, the transition through the dimensions of

development—the state will have to lead economic and social development even before it becomes a politically mature democracy. This does not mean that development is a substitute for democracy.

Modernisation theory famously posits that authoritarianism and development may coexist as a transitional stage that should lead to democracy, arguing that political transformation would be driven by economic growth. In other words, economic growth increases the likelihood of authoritarian regimes giving way to democracy. This theory is ‘societal-centred and structuralist, examining how economic advancement and social differentiation lead to political mobilization which culminates in the establishment of democracy’.¹⁰ Modernisation theorists argue that economic development in authoritarian states gives rise to a stronger middle class, fosters a greater interest in politics, and places more demands on the political regime, which may then prompt the regime to make democratic concessions. In practice, however, modernisation has enriched ruling elites and technocrats while the masses awaited the fruits of growth to trickle down from the top. In turn, this exacerbated the conditions that were supposed to be alleviated while also giving rise to elite forms of democracy and thus the manipulation of the awaited political change.

While modernisation inspired hope that over time, the poor of the Global South could achieve what rich countries had, reality fell short of the dream, or the promise. It has been made clear beyond any doubt that development and modernisation ‘are terms that refer to a politics of reform designed to preserve the status quo while promising to alter it’.¹¹ The forces of the Global North and its international agencies that supported modernisation, along with the local governments that adhered to the policies they imposed, are all partners in this deception. If it is understood that modernisation suits the capitalist interests of the former, then for the latter, it is ‘essentially social engineering from above and an operation of political containment rather than democratization’.¹² Ultimately, economic growth in some countries did not shore up democratic forces, and it has become apparent that the challenge is less about attaining some specific measure of per capita income, at which the transition to democracy occurs, than it is about ‘the correlation between the economies’ growth and the resilience of these authoritarian governments’.¹³ As Matfess notes, this correlation should trouble advocates of democracy.

In contrast to modernisation theory, which called into question the development policies of developing countries, the theory of developmental authoritarianism emerged to explain development under the authoritarian regimes of newly industrialising countries. Developmental authoritarianism refers to “the capacity of the state to govern while achieving high levels of development, which is considered a prerequisite for ensuring the stability of power in these systems, coupled with a near non-existent opposition or an opposition subject to the state authority and operating according to its vision, which gives the impression of a certain margin of freedom. Similarly, such regimes establish practices associated with democracy, such as organising elections and allowing the operation of civil society, journalism, and media.”¹⁴

Developmental authoritarianism draws on the concept of the developmental state, exemplified by Japan, where the state was the driver of development. The concept of the developmental state

was used to analyse the evolution of East Asian countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore as they ‘strove for rapid economic growth by forcefully intervening in economic transactions and overseeing macroeconomic planning’.¹⁵

A common feature of these states is rapid development—understood politically as competent authoritarianism, which is viewed as potentially more efficient than freedom in achieving development and improving living conditions. On the whole, they ‘combine varying degrees of repression and legitimacy in contexts where civil society has been weak or weakened. These states concentrate considerable power, authority, autonomy and competence in central political and bureaucratic institutions of the state, notably their economic bureaucracies, and generate pervasive infrastructural capacity’.¹⁶

The developmental state model has proven quite resilient, China being among the most prominent contemporary examples. The developmental state thus continues to challenge the notion that the best system for development is democracy. As Heberer notes, ‘[A]uthoritarianism is not necessarily an obstacle to development but can—under specific conditions and given an effective state capacity—become an “authoritarian developmentalism”. We believe that an effective development roadmap, its effective implementation, institutionalization and adaptiveness in terms of institutional changes are much more crucial in classifying a developmental state than the pure attribute of “authoritarian”’.¹⁷

Ultimately, it seems that instead of focusing on the correlation between development and democracy—i.e., that development necessarily leads to democracy or that democracy is a condition for development—development and authoritarianism can be seen as independent variables. Some policies can promote development in parallel with other policies that seek to entrench authoritarian governance, without the latter putting a brake on development.

Considering the ability of authoritarian countries to achieve development, is it possible to draw inspiration from the successes of developmental states and follow their model to achieve development goals in countries like Morocco? Despite the importance of the developmental state model, it does not explain the dynamics of development in Morocco. Developmental states record high levels of economic growth and provide a broader array of quality social services than Morocco. The Moroccan state’s commitment to an economic development agenda, despite providing for some social services, does not rise to the level of a developmental state as defined above.

In contrast, politically Morocco is a semi-authoritarian or quasi-democratic state—that is, a state that adopts procedural democracy (regular elections) while maintaining some features of authoritarianism. Here, the concept of competitive authoritarianism is helpful to understand the relationship between authoritarian governance and development. This approach looks at the structure of authoritarian or hybrid regimes and how they employ democratic mechanisms to control the levers of power. Levitsky and Way give a concise definition: ‘What distinguishes competitive authoritarianism from democracy, however, is the fact that incumbent abuse of the state violates at least one of three defining attributes of democracy: (1) free elections, (2) broad protection of civil liberties, and (3) a reasonably level playing field’.¹⁸ The violation of the first

feature means that despite the existence of political competition, unelected officials representing the state retain significant authority and control over development decision-making; the violation of the second means that there exists only partial freedom, which can be arbitrarily withdrawn to narrow the developmental choices of citizens; the violation of the third characteristic means that just as authoritarian regimes create some simulation of political competitiveness, they similarly foster a false competition to control the levers of the economy in a way that favours their own agents.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this paper argues in the following two sections that the paradox of development in Morocco is best described as the perpetuation of authoritarian governance. In this model, which could be termed ‘authoritarian developmentalism’, close state management of the exigencies of economic and social development leads to the side-lining of political principles that would ensure the development of the state itself.

The State and Socioeconomic Development: Soaring Discourse, Dysfunctional Practice

During the decades following national independence from France in 1956, the Moroccan government focused on economic development, believing that economic growth would lead to improvements in social indicators, including poverty, educational attainment, literacy, and health. While the International Monetary Fund held up Morocco as a success story following the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s, the World Bank and other international development agencies criticised the country for not being more diligent in addressing social development.¹⁹ Indeed, the practice of deep development seemed to entirely elude Moroccan governments. The social cost of the economic reforms instituted in the country during this period—neoliberal policies of liberalisation and deregulation—would shape the historical context in which the social dimension of development began to be rethought.

Late in the rule of King Hassan II, there was some engagement with the concept of development, but it only really picked up steam with the opening of the so-called ‘new era’, when King Mohammed VI assumed the throne. It was at that time that the idea of development began recurring in royal speeches, suggesting the king’s passion for human development, and began to be integrated into national and local plans and programmes. The National Initiative for Human Development (INDH), launched in 2005, is the most prominent development programme of King Mohammed VI’s reign.

Despite the national reference of the initiative, evident in the conclusions and recommendations of the fiftieth anniversary report on human development in Morocco from independence to 2005 and the coming two decades,²⁰ the INDH preserved the neoliberal spirit and vision of the modern state, pushing citizens to take responsibility for improving their standard of living instead of continuing to rely on the state. The underlying message of the initiative is “while the state is to provide tools and training, individuals are to make good choices on their own and to decide independently to take advantage of opportunities to make improvements to their lives—which ultimately impact the nation in a positive and productive

way. Citizens have the right to make choices autonomously, but their decisions are expected to fall within the state's goals of development and the creation of modern citizens."²¹

The reforms that preceded or accompanied the INDH did not strip the state of its authority over development, but simply diffused it through indirect forms of state governance. Despite the "widespread rhetoric linking INDH to the grounding of 'participatory democracy' in Morocco, the findings suggest that it has in fact strengthened the power of the Ministry of Interior's²² representatives at the expense of local government, that it has served as a vehicle to co-opt regime-friendly NGOs and local associations, and that it has led to the fragmentation and weakening of local (political) accountability."²³

In turn, local elites moved into the civil society space in an attempt to gain access to resources, increasingly building their social legitimacy not on their status as political representatives, but on their renewed alliance with the king through the INDH and the relationships of patronage it allowed them to maintain.²⁴ The initiative has thus had adverse consequences for local democracy, allowing for the increased influence of unelected state agents, which in turn has eroded parties' organisational structures. In this way, the state has been able to redeploy its authoritarian power.

In addition, the state's direct responsibility for development at the national level has not stopped it from approving legislative reforms to channel the development planning process downward within the framework of decentralisation. Local groups have been authorised by elected councils to establish development programmes on the local level,²⁵ but the continued close oversight of Ministry of Interior representatives has narrowed the margin for autonomous action. Moreover, ministry tutelage entails heightened concern with "control and policing, and prioritises the security approach at the expense of development, re-marketing at the local level the dominant central state model, whose main concern is social control through the various tools at its disposal. As development is overshadowed by the policing function in local dynamics, it is not surprising that these local units remain weak and insignificant, providing services for the benefit of the central state."²⁶

As long as they cannot be free of the control of the local arms of state authority, they will continue to better serve the state than the population they represent.

The state has uneasily combined neoliberal ideology with significant intervention in the economy, leading economic development as part of its monopoly on development as a whole. And, in fact, this may be necessary, since 'the state is the final guarantor of the conditions necessary for achieving some measure of equality between the poor and the rich. Reducing the state's footprint means favouring the rich at the expense of the poor'.²⁷ At the same time, however, this shuts the private sector—the main generator of economic growth—out of the development process; the private sector thus does not contribute to development. Worse still, the state appears to be powerless before private sector practices that hinder development, such as tax evasion, which costs it a not inconsiderable sum that could finance development projects. According to a 2019 report issued by Oxfam Morocco, 'Morocco loses more than \$2.45 billion annually to tax evasion...Some 82% of corporate tax revenue comes from only 2% of

companies.²⁸ This was confirmed by the Ministry of Economy and Finance in the third national debate on taxes held in the same year. According to the ministry, ‘50% of VAT revenues come from just 150 companies. Only 27% of tax declarations end in payment while 0.8% of firms pay 80% of corporate tax’.²⁹

This reality indicates that local capitalism is parasitic capitalism. It also reflects the desire of the private sector to evade any contribution to development, despite state incentives. Indeed, with the state-owned public sector being chiefly responsible for spearheading development, the private sector bears no responsibility at all for national development. This does not mean, however, that the public sector ably shoulders the responsibility entrusted to it: it either lacks the financial means to expand public investments in productive utilities or social services because of the budget deficit and external debt service,³⁰ or it is implicated in corruption, which squanders the limited financial resources that do exist.³¹

Since domestic capitalism is imported and not independent, the state cannot break the bonds of foreign economic dependence. Accordingly, it does not possess independent economic decision-making and thus the autonomy to set development objectives, means, and policies. Since it does not truly serve the national economy, capitalism in Morocco is neither nationalist nor developmental. On one hand, being primarily based on rentier economic activities, it hinders development. Moroccan capitalists’ wealth is largely concentrated in trade, brokerage, and franchises instead of industry, which is the true engine of economic development. This means that economic growth depends on capital accumulation rather than production and expansion: ‘Growth is mainly driven by a high investment rate, exceeding 30 per cent of GDP since 2005’.³² On the other hand, the private sector has virtually no commitment to development. As Yusuf notes, ‘It does not spend on aspects of social responsibility, for example, for scientific research in universities, for the establishment of specialised research centres or the provision grants to researchers and scientists, or to attract skills.’³³ Even when it engages in some socially beneficial activities, it is typically simply a backdoor to tax evasion.

Despite all these structural imbalances, state economic development policies do not tackle the structure of the economy head on. As such, state interventions are limited, driven by the preoccupation with higher growth, which represents merely an increased share of national income for businessmen that does not serve development. The private sector does not reinvest its profits to create more jobs—expansion and accumulation—and hence the state’s economic role is geared primarily to the development of the private sector. And even these economic development efforts have failed to increase economic competitiveness and boost growth, which has not exceeded 1.5 per cent since 2015.³⁴

The piecemeal, limited approach to development renders it fruitless. Even as it is described as movement towards a better society, it does not vindicate citizens’ economic and social rights; with this kind of development, they are merely parties to the productive process. In consequence, the state does not diligently regulate the private sector, which explains the state’s indulgence of its failures to honour the rights of workers, whose wages do not match their productivity. When development is geared to improving the population’s standard of living, it not only enhances

their well-being, it also contributes to economic prosperity: ‘Meeting the needs of the poor would not only help reduce poverty levels, but would also improve the education and skill levels of the population, with the concomitant potential for contributing to greater economic growth. In addition, as the poor get richer, their purchasing power rises, benefiting domestic firms’.³⁵

Citizens’ enjoyment of their rights represents the missing dimension in development. Development is not reflected in their lives, and economic and social structures do not respond to their aspirations and ambitions. This is evident in the lack of social justice, seen in the inequality of income distribution, which adversely impacts living standards and leads to more widespread deprivation. This deprivation is not limited to income poverty, but extends to the lack of access to quality basic services (health and education), especially as the state retreats from its social role and citizens are forced to turn to the private sector to obtain these services.

Faced with the fact that development policies and their concrete outcomes did not meet critical public needs and expectations, the state, in the person of its head, King Mohammed VI, acknowledged the failure of the development path,³⁶ after which a new model of development was articulated in 2019. While we await the new discourse—in essence, a report³⁷—to be translated into practice, we can nevertheless see that the new paradigm reflects what might be called ‘the rule of experts’, whose worlds are far-removed from citizens’ daily problems, as well as the vision of government leaders, rather than that of specific social classes. The new model continues to view development as policies issued from on high that are adopted by the state, rather than as the right of individuals and groups. It also replicates the old focus on the technical dimensions of development, especially when it comes to the economy. This focus divorces it from citizens’ needs—a good education, for example—instead turning citizens into resources in the service of the private sector. As in the old model, ‘Human capital does not receive its due, with more than 60 per cent of the working population without a diploma’.³⁸

Regarding the report on the new development model, it is notable that it employs the same neoliberal conceptual framework and lexicon as official speeches and government reports, with a focus on ‘competitiveness’, ‘attracting foreign investment’, and ‘structural reforms’—all of which are geared to serve domestic and foreign capital—as well as ‘labour market flexibility’ and the priority of ‘creating value for shareholders/investors’. In contrast, the report pays little attention to values such as social justice, workers’ rights, and gender relations. This discourse betrays the report’s politics and ideology, which favour capital and aim to serve the interests of the dominant social classes in Moroccan society,³⁹ while pushing vulnerable groups further down the ladder of the state’s concerns. Indeed, the flaws in the programme for universal social protection—compulsory health insurance—suggest that the state is transitioning from a welfare state to a minimal state. One analyst asserts that the programme may have far-reaching effects on the state’s formulation of social policies “by imposing ‘coercive solidarity’, the state will lift subsidies for goods and public services by gradually dismantling the compensation fund,⁴⁰ which has long been the last manifestation of the welfare state. In turn, this threatens to deepen social disparities and helps clear the way for the policy of abandonment, an endeavour that has always been supported by donor bodies as part of ‘a smooth structural adjustment’.”⁴¹

State Imperviousness to Political Development

The state plays a key role in achieving development, but this role can only be discussed by delving into the institutions that link state to society—namely, the political system. In this context, institutional reform is one of the most important components of the political dimension of development, while the latter constitutes the framework that links the economic and social dimensions of development. Political development is what ultimately enables empowerment. Through the operation of its institutions, the political system affects the economic and social empowerment of individuals and groups. Contemporary thought on political development therefore emphasises ‘the importance of the political system’s ability to meet the changing needs of members of society’,⁴² including its ability to provide political goods such as security, freedom, well-being, and justice.

The quality of state institutions is a decisive factor in the effective (or ineffective) provision of public services. This is especially true of public policymaking institutions, where the trust given to them reflects their responsiveness to citizens’ aspirations. In Morocco, however, ‘Trust in government is amongst the lowest from all the surveyed institutions...Generally speaking, the distrust in the government has often been related to the perceived lack of action to solve the most pressing issues of the country’.⁴³ The lack of confidence in parliament is similarly due to the disconnect between the promises made in speeches and the actual implementation of these promises.⁴⁴

State transformation via the development of its political system is a necessary condition for comprehensive development because it allows for greater public participation in deciding and planning for the population’s well-being, rather than yielding to top-down directives that reflect not only the state’s quest to maintain the status quo, but also the rhetoric of superiority and condescension.⁴⁵

However, the development discourse is not quite a state ideology because the policies implementing it are not guided by a coherent political or economic doctrine. It is more a veneer applied to appease foreign donors than a reflection of political will for development. Domestically, it is merely a pragmatic stance, endowing the state with the legitimacy of achievement to compensate for the erosion of its overall legitimacy due to its coercive social and political control. The state is ‘developmental’ by virtue of the exceptional services it provides within the framework of social welfare policies, while its deterrent or restrictive policies make it ‘authoritarian’.

Since the state still oversees development and accepts only limited citizen participation, it controls the doses of change administered. Given the mistrust between the state and the citizenry, its concern is not whether expanding citizen participation will actually guarantee the reform of their conditions by securing their economic and social needs, but rather the fear that this could mutate into political awareness and then a movement to demand reform of the state itself. Faced with the fluidity of internal and external challenges that make this inevitable, the state is nevertheless convinced that ‘political development comes in a second stage. It remains essential

at the current stage to achieve economic and social growth, which constitutes the solid foundation for any democratic transition, a discourse that finds support in the economic and social crisis that Morocco is experiencing'.⁴⁶ So, when the issue of poverty, for example, is reduced to a technical problem, it is depoliticised, seen solely as a result of the unequal distribution of wealth.

After the mediating institutions between state and citizenry embraced political pragmatism and at a time when partisan political actors were no longer making radical demands like the political opposition of old, which did not shrink from confronting the head of the political system with the need for change and reform, the political struggle turned towards the street. The state has thus faced demands for reforms from various social protest movements, at least since the 20 February movement, the most energetic to emerge in the wave of Arab Uprisings.

As demands for reform escalated on the regional level, leading to the fall of some regimes and to near state failure in other countries, the state responded, hastily amending the constitution 'against the backdrop of restructuring the political system, with the proviso that the political transformations that Morocco was witnessing in the context of transition, and given the specificity of its experience, would not create a new political system, but should rather lead to its reform'.⁴⁷ Although the reform was significant in that it curtailed government authority, in practice it has not prevented the exercise of state power. After the state was able to regain the initiative, it fell back on its usual coercive methods to confront the social and economic demands that next emerged, specifically with the Rif movement in 2016 and the 2018 Jerada protests, and the subsequent human rights violations, calculating that the costs of repression were less than those of acquiescing to the protestors' demands. These episodes demonstrate that the state still views developmental demands as challenges to its authority and security. The longer the protests persist—they later assumed innovative forms such as economic boycotts, digital protests, or protests by Ultras (football fan clubs)—the more profound the crisis for the state's political security doctrine. This is a crisis 'linked to fear of the young generation, one that makes demands and has a societal project grounded fundamentally in a democratic society that guarantees the rights of individuals...It is a fear that society will enter a permanent state of mobilisation based on asking questions and constantly calling for a revived social dynamism'.⁴⁸

A strong state may be required to preserve the country's political stability, but this does not justify curbing societal, albeit factional, demands. The stability so valorised by the Moroccan state—apart from being deceptive insofar as covers the failure to resolve development issues—in fact conceals the state's resistance to embarking on development, for there can be no development without developing the tools of development: the state and its organs. The development of security institutions means not only enhancing them, but also entrusting them with the safety of citizens along with the security of the state. It is this that brings actual stability and thus provides the opportunity for development and prosperity. Indeed, development has a security component that is no less important than others.

A state that is not opposed to political development respects freedoms and rights, but in its practices, the Moroccan state has continued to develop a culture of fear in the political sphere,

seeking to foster real hope solely in the economic and social spheres. State restrictions on rights and liberties explain the continuation of a self-disciplining society that accepts the reality of abridged rights, first and foremost the right to development and the consequent rights that strengthen it, such as the fair and equitable distribution of services and the tax burden. The absence of such rights implies the lack of a normative commitment to laws, and in fact, the authorities' recourse to the law is selective, often half-hearted and tailored to suit particular arrangements.

In fact, while political development is seen 'as an approach that is concerned with studying the relationship between society and the political system and aspiring to develop both, namely, government institutions on one hand and society on the other',⁴⁹ the kind of institutional reform necessary to effect a paradigm shift in development in Morocco still has a long way to go, mainly due to the state's wavering political will. The evidence for this is that we find no place for the demand for political development in the state's development discourse, which is dominated by socioeconomic concerns. The new development model referred to above similarly overlooks political development, failing to provide for the institutional reforms necessary to make it happen. How can there be a break with this stage of development management given the perpetuation of the same institutional structures that have endowed Morocco with the legal, regulatory, and political mechanisms that systematically generate the antitheses of development? Actual development entails not only a new discourse that runs counter to the old development model, but also a transformation in the institutional mechanisms that will turn the empty quest for development into a substantive endeavour. The adoption of a development programme alone cannot be a measure of development, and the reform of state institutions cannot be divorced from accountability of those responsible for them, who have squandered years of potential development.

Thus, the lack of institutional influence on development results from the depoliticisation of a process that is inherently political. At the same time, the exclusion of such influence has the political function of entrenching the bureaucracy and technocracy of the developmental state. As Ferguson says: 'By making the intentional blueprints for "development" so highly visible, a "development" project can end up performing extremely sensitive political operations involving the entrenchment and expansion of the institutional state power almost invisibly, under cover of a neutral, technical mission to which no one can object'.⁵⁰

It goes without saying that since 'political development is one of the foundations on which the countries of the Global South should rely in order to make a genuine break with all forms of traditional systems that are no longer aligned with political, economic, and social conditions',⁵¹ the structure of the Moroccan state, with its adherence to its traditional roots and its largely unchanged centralised state authority, cannot revitalise the structures of the country's social or even economic edifice. Political development is the appropriate framework not only for surmounting the political crisis, but also for leaving behind the state of developmental stagnation and inertia. Accordingly, this requires a reconstitution of state authority such that it operates

within and not above society and the belief in the possibility of radical change that does not necessarily threaten the stability of the political system.

Conclusion

This study found that the form of development existing in Morocco is an extension of political authoritarianism and that the latter is responsible for the failure of economic and social development, which in turn is merely the product of a political process related to state choices.

Of course, the state still plays an important role in leading development, and its interventions in this regard go beyond the economic sphere. It develops and nurtures social capital that is not produced by market forces and encourages citizens to build useful social networks to facilitate the development agenda. While the state has failed to foster development, this does not mean that development must be captive to ineffective state action. Rather, what is required is better state action, based on democratic good governance grounded in good economic practices and social advances that can only be consolidated through politics. Political development geared to dismantling authoritarianism is a thus prerequisite for the state to be truly developmental.

The failure of development, while seemingly the result of a gap between the directives issued from on high and their implementation on the ground, is in fact linked with a profound crisis in the way the state conceives of development, which explains why ‘failed’ development projects are repeatedly accepted. In fact, this leads us to another level of analysis related to the political economy of development in Morocco, to wit: recurring developmental failure performs strategic tasks for the state, as it continues to attract attention and popular support and generates more enthusiasm for development plans despite their uncertain results.

The long-term success of Morocco’s developmental model therefore depends on correcting the state’s vision of development in the short and medium term, which means scrutinising this model in all its complexities: social, meaning improvements to the population’s standard of living; political, meaning the realisation of justice, the legitimacy of policies, and the redistribution of wealth and income; and economic, meaning the pursuit of growth.

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