

Sciences Po – Direction scientifique

Titre	Social Innovation in Times of Conflict. Economic and Citizen Alternatives in the Middle East
Durée	2 ans
Coordinateur(s) du projet et centres de recherche impliqués	<p><i>Coord. : Stéphanie LatteAbdallah (CERI-SciencesPo/CNRS)</i></p> <p>Olivier Grojean (Paris 1/CESSP/EHESS) ; Sarah Guillemet (Doctoral student Centre Emile Durkheim/SciencesPo Bordeaux) ; Athina Arampatzi (Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid) ; Filippo Maranconi (Doctoral student, IRIS/EHESS, Paris) ; Agathe Fautras (Doctoral student, ENeC/Paris-Sorbonne/IFEA, Istanbul) ; Bénédicte Bonzi (Doctoral student, IIAC/EHESS, Paris) ; Rehab Sakr (Cairo University) ; Ramy Abdo (Al-Aqsa University, Gaza) ; Agnès Favier (European University Institute, Florence) Stéphanie Latte Abdallah (CERI-SciencesPo/CNRS)</p> <p><i>Autres partenaires institutionnels :</i> Law and Political science faculty, An-Najah University (Nablu, Palestine) (Joni Assi, dean) Chaire de l'Education à l'Eco-Citoyenneté et au Développement Durable, St Joseph University (Beirut, Lebanon) (Fadi el-Hage, chairman)</p>

Description du projet	<p>This project deals with the emergence of economic and citizen alternatives in the contemporary Middle East in conflict contexts: that is to say, contests and struggles related to situations of war or conflict, confinements and sieges, severe political, economic and/ or migratory crisis, various forms of opposition to political systems and to neo-liberalism, claims for autonomy. Hence, it focuses on situations where the States are challenged either because they are failing or weak, or on the contrary due to their authoritarianism. The starting point of this project is an on-going personal research on the arising forms of engagement in a "resistance economy" in Palestine aimed at strengthening a local economy, just and respectful of the environment, in order to regain parts of sovereignty in a context of colonial occupation and confinement. This resistance economy relies equally on traditional economic forms and innovative practices. It is part of a history of resistance echoing the first Intifada (1987-1993) which was initially conceived as an "economic war". This project resulted in two conferences and a workshop which brought together researchers and social actors in 2014, 2015 and 2016 at An-Najah University in Nablu and in Ramallah (Palestine). The objective of this SAB is to analyze comparatively the specificity of these contexts of conflict or deep crisis for the emergence of alternative economic schemes (social and solidarity economy, social entrepreneurship, local productions, bio and agroecology, community farms, seed banks, movements without intermediaries, citizen consumption, circular economy, renewable energies, community financing and non-monetary exchanges, etc.) that are to be studied in their citizen dimension : the way they challenge power organization with new forms of governance and solidarity, direct democracy, self-management, collective ownership, etc. We will consider what they have in common, i.e. their societal significance (Laville 2016). In fact, these engagements most often combine economic, political, cultural and subjective claims (Pleyers, Captain 2016) and are woven equally by critical thinking and practices (Frere, Jacquemain 2013). Firstly, this SAB aims to develop common perspectives from different case studies in the Middle East - namely in Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Kurdistan, Egypt, and Turkey - to which will be added</p>
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	<p>the case of Greece in southern Mediterranean Europe which has experienced a serious economic crisis. Secondly, its objective is to strengthen a team of researchers in order to formalize an ERC research grant project to be submitted in 2020. Social and solidarity economy emerges from necessity that is omnipresent as a factor of engagement (Frère, Jacquemain 2013). Thus, this project assumes that conflict and crisis situations will show how political necessity, economic necessity and environmental necessity are closely interconnected. Analyzing social innovation in such situations in a geographical area which has not yet been studied in that perspective is of special heuristic dimension. Moreover, it will foster a better understanding of practices that are, by some aspects only, similar in Europe, North and South America which have been thoroughly studied.</p> <p>1. Crisis and radical criticism of political and economic models</p> <p>In our case studies, crisis situations are strong incentives for social actors to reconsider what Laville calls economic determinism and the focus on the market and the state (2016). Radical criticism of both modernist or neo-liberal political economies and state regimes arose with protest movements (Turkey, Greece, Lebanon, Egypt), wars or long lasting conflicts and claims for autonomy (Syria, Kurdistan, Palestine), and migratory crises due to the influx of refugees (in Lebanon, Turkey, and Greece). State regimes are contested either for their authoritarianism, or their incapacity to address main public concerns and/or the economic crisis due to weakness or corruption. In some cases, international actors' roles in the crisis such as the European community (Greece, Arampatzi) or the international aid system (Palestine, Latte Abdallah; Iraqi Kurdistan, Bonzi) are also strongly reconsidered. In Turkey, following the Gezi protest movement (May-June 2013), part of society is challenging neoliberal policies initiated in the 1980s and reinforced by the AKP since 2002. The contestation targets policies that led to the control of Turkish agriculture by agri-food companies, the commercialization of public goods (factories, forests, rivers), or urban transformation that is developing normative public spaces (promoting religious conservatism and consumerism) and evicting migrant and undocumented populations in informal and old districts (Fautras). In Lebanon, in the wake of one-off protests (waste crisis, electricity crisis), citizens engage in alternative agricultural production methods and in a plurality of citizen initiatives (Latte Abdallah). In Kurdistan, the PKK, Komala and KDPI formulate diverging political agendas on economic and social alternatives (Bozarlsan, 1997). A model of "Democratic Confederalism" for the first, where economic self-management would participate in social self-management (Tatort, 2015); identical wages between combatants for the other two, with financial support for the specific needs of female combatants. The conceptions of revolutionary models diverge. However, the aim of these three guerrilla political parties is the same: from an autonomy perspective, they pursue a radically different model from their societies of origin, opposing both neo-liberalism in Turkey and Iran and a statist model (Guillemet, Grojean). In Palestine, a connection has been established between the entrenchment of military occupation, the economic system established by the Paris Protocol (1994) and neoliberalism in the form of Israeli but also Palestinian capitalist interests : it has been labelled "economic neo-colonialism" (Nakhleh 2014) (Latte Abdallah). In Syria, the siege of cities and zones held by the regime's opposition (Idlib, Aleppo, Homs, the Ghouta etc.) forced the inhabitants to find alternatives to the organizational and productive schemes connected to the state (Favier), such as the intensive agriculture model using industrial seeds and chemical inputs. Following survival strategies, they implemented new ways of cultivating local seeds adapted to specific conditions of scarcity, channeled through solidarity networks by-passing the regime's checkpoints, in order to recreate minimal food autonomy. These methods have been extended to Lebanon through more systematic alternative practices aimed at supporting these encircled zones and contributing to the Syrian refugees' economy and coping strategies in exile (Maranconi, Latte Abdallah).</p> <p>2. Glocal dimension and political polysemy of social innovation</p> <p>These engagements raise the issue of a democratization of the economy, and consequently, of political democratization. In some cases, it addresses the aid system democratization issue: for instance, in Palestine where some activist promote Palestinian community financing and limit international aid to solidarity donors. Sousa Santos argued for a southern epistemology stressing that the "radicalization of</p>
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	<p>economic democracy goes hand in hand with that of participatory democracy" (2016). In a similar vein, this project aims to discuss the specificity of various resistances to power organization in crisis contexts in the Middle East. Such practices are indeed glocal and politically polysemic: for example, if the Turkish community gardens (bustan) set up following the Gezi movement (Fautras), those cultivated in besieged Syrian cities (Maranconi, Latte Abdallah) or planted in the Old City of Jerusalem (Latte Abdallah) share some features with the "guerrilla gardening" movement started in the US in the 70's claiming a right to the city (Crane 2011), they refer to local specificities and to patterns that this project will study in a comparative perspective on the basis of the various case studies selected. The project aims to analyze "activist grammars" ("des grammaires militantes") which are both inspired by global innovations and anchored in renewed ancient, customary or historical practices. They reinvent traditions and historical practices such as the ancient Istanbul gardens (Fautras), the 'victory gardens' of the first Palestinian Intifada (Latte Abdallah), feminist and ecological concerns specific to Kurdistan ancient culture (Grojean, Guillemet), Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese baladi agriculture, or non-monetary village-based community exchange and mutual aid systems. The project deals with the circulation of concepts, discourses, practices, know-how, products or objects (small energy production systems, seeds, etc.) and of social actors (activists, refugees) at the regional level. Moreover, the comparative perspective aims to develop an epistemology specific to these contexts in which the multiplication of constraints requires more inventiveness and creativity. Contrary to the current bulk of works that analyze these moments of crisis as only marked by the devastating effects of war, political, economic, social or statist violence, and without minimizing these structuring factors, we will consider grassroots social innovations and creativity versus scarcity and crisis, and their longer-term effects on the organization of power. We will analyze the very contemporary historicity of social and citizen creativity and alternative schemes by studying comparatively the micro-temporalities of these conflictual contexts.</p> <p>3. Renewing studies on engagement and mobilizations in the Middle East These practices show the emergence of new modes of engagement that radically shift the paradigm of protest in the region because they do not address their demands primarily to existing representative bodies and the institutional political arena, unlike what was developed by much of the theory of mobilizations and contentious politics. These engagements are above all pragmatic: they mobilize by productive and entrepreneurial practices. They act at citizen level, here and now, and at the local level. Citizens hardly address their claims and demands to states and focus on the restoration of localized forms of sovereignty and the development of solidarities and horizontal networks, between peers. Thus they reformulate the question of citizenship through specific "acts of citizenship" (Isin 2008), practically reclaiming concrete rights. They intend to restore various forms of sovereignty: first, in contexts of war or colonization, food sovereignty, and then economic and political sovereignty. This can be seen in Palestinian "resistance economy" when people reclaim and make the best use of the scarcity of resources that have been captured by colonial policies in the West Bank or severely limited by the blockade in Gaza (Latte Abdallah, Abdo), in civil women mobilizations in Turkish Kurdistan who set up a non-mixed network of food, agricultural and textile cooperatives to reinforce their independence (Guillemet). It can also be observed in citizen collectives who carry out various forms of actions in Istanbul districts dealing with urban, food, environmental and societal issues (Fautras), or in the claims to public space and economic autonomy formulated by lower class Egyptian women occupying huge spaces in metro stations and on facebook to sell goods (Sakr). At the local level, municipalities' roles need to be carefully studied. Indeed, they are key actors of such initiatives in Lebanon, Greece and Palestine and in Turkish Kurdistan, where, in the wake of the PKK, they have established forms of autonomy, radical democratic practices and a gender based co-ruling system for main positions guaranteeing gender equity (Grojean). Despite their main pragmatic orientation and their focus on economic practices, these modes of action and engagements are inventing new forms of citizenship and are framing an alternative society. They constitute experimental utopias (Dechézelles, Olive 2017). In this sense, they are shaping what Dacheux and Laville describe as a global political</p>
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	<p>project that concerns society as a whole, a utopia (2003). Firstly, we will study thoroughly their modes of action and repertoires focusing on their ways of transforming dominant spaces, social relations and geographical representations (Jonas 2013), paying particular attention, in the different languages, to the vocabulary used by the actors to describe their mobilizations (green intifada, green bombs, rebellion, autonomy, resistance, guerilla, green jungle ... etc.). Secondly, we will study the interconnection between these new engagements and other forms of existing mobilizations such as partisan activism, militant armed struggle, electoral competitions, space and place occupations, popular resistance, demonstrations and civil society demands. For each case study, researchers will frame a specific activist geography, that will be cross-analyzed and discussed in a comparative perspective to elaborate a broader alternative activism geography in the Middle East.</p> <p>4. New political subjectivities</p> <p>These new forms of mobilization are framing alternative citizenship schemes : a citizenship in action, horizontal, exercised between peers. Elaborating on case studies grounded in fieldwork research, the project will develop a sociology of the actors of these new engagements highlighting the moments of collective and individual ruptures, biographical bifurcations, and modes of subjectivation. Case studies will focus on social and gender issues, the latter being more specifically addressed concerning Iranian and Turkish Kurdistan from the beginning of armed struggle (1969 and 1984) (Guillemet) and post-revolutionary Egypt (Sakr). Yet, these commitments are not only social, they are also deeply personal: they are shaping the individual in his subjectivation, understood as the way of thinking and constructing oneself, as a principle of meaning involving personal ethics and a need for coherence (Pleyers, Captain 2016). They are built on values and affects, which formulations will be carefully studied, such as an ethics of trust, solidarity and justice (social, environmental), cooperation and sharing, that take into consideration refugee populations in the Greek (Arampatzi), Turkish (Fautras) and Lebanese (Latte Abdallah) cases. These engagements combine a life ethic and a philosophy with practical and entrepreneurial actions. They represent more than social and political commitments: they elaborate new political subjectivities, which can be described as holistic, ranging from daily life ethic to deep transformation of economic, social and political relations.</p>
<p>Eléments méthodologiques</p>	<p>This project brings together researchers from different social science disciplines (contemporary history, anthropology, sociology, political science, geography) who will use their own research methods combining field data collection and written, digital and audio-visual sources. However, all studies will be based on in-depth fieldwork and sociological (interviews and collection of oral sources) and ethnographic approaches aimed to analyze perceptions, discourses and practices in situ. Moreover, several researchers will work on places and cases related to connected issues in order to produce detailed studies of these alternatives and work on fragmented zones where the field can be partially inaccessible, depending on the location and period, and on who is conducting the research. They will be in permanent dialogue, will combine data from different sources and periods, and will co-produce part of the scientific data, results and outcomes of the project. Most of these citizen and economic alternatives flourished very recently. Yet, some researchers have already done some fieldwork on previous periods in places that are nowadays difficult to research on : Turkish Kurdistan for instance which has been a real 'citizen lab' at the beginning of the 2000 till 2015 when the Turkish Army relaunched the war in Kurdish regions.</p> <p>For now these groups are organized as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kurdistan: Bénédicte Bonzi (Iraki Kurdistan), Olivier Grojean (Turkish Kurdistan), Sarah Guillemet (Turkish and Iranian Kurdistan/gender perspective) - Turkey: Agathe Fautras (and Olivier Grojean, Sarah Guillemet) - Syria and Syrian refugees: Agnès Favier (Syria), Filippo Maranconi (Syrian refugees in Turkey), Stéphanie Latte Abdallah (Syrian refugees in Lebanon) - Lebanon: Stéphanie Latte Abdallah - Palestine: Stéphanie Latte Abdallah (West Bank), Rami Abdo (Gaza Strip)

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Ressources actuelles	The mission expenses of the tenure researchers will be covered by their institutions. The last meeting and conference (2 days) will be co-organized and co-funded with the institutional partners of the project.
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Ressources souhaitées	<p>10 000 euros for 2 years : mission expenses</p> <p>Team Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparatory team meetings (2) : Transportation (Bordeaux 115€ ; Florence 170€ ; Istanbul 200 € ; Athènes 200€ ; Le Caire 400€ + 3 nights hotel accomodation (80x3, 240€) + lunch (150€) : 1475 x 2=2950€ - Final Meeting (1) : 3600 euros <p>Exploratory fieldwork for researchers without tenure and institutional funding :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Filippo Maranconi : Turkey fieldwork on Syrian refugees (flight Paris-Gaziantep 300€ + 10 days per diem 700€) = 1000€ - Bénédicte Bonzi : Iraki Kurdistan fieldwork (flight Paris-Erbil 670€ + 10 days per diem 700 euros) = 1350€ <p>Mission to build institutionnal partnership and team in the field :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stéphanie Latte : Iraki Kurdistan (flight Paris- Erbil 670€+5 days per diem 350€) = 1100€
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Greece: Athina Aramptazi- Egypt: Rehab Sakr <p>Other researchers and local actors will join the team as local scientific and institutional collaborations develop further. Indeed, the project to be submitted to the ERC in 2020 will be strongly anchored in local scientific and institutional collaborations in each study site, that this SAB aims to structure and expand (in Greece, Iraqi Kurdistan notably). Ideally, one researcher associated with a local university will be involved in each study site. Through these collaborations, we will participate in teaching courses, involve students and interns (in each site and from SciencesPo), and more broadly include active citizens in the project in participatory and citizen science schemes. This cooperation will also facilitate access to data, in cases where certain zones are difficult to reach. For the ERC project proposal, one of the objectives of this SAB is indeed to develop an innovative framework on participatory data production methodologies (participatory ethnographies, participatory action research) and restitution of the results (to a scientific and wider audience) : i.e. building specific tools such as alternative cartographies, MOOCs etc., and proposing new modes of transmission and innovative writing such as visual methodologies (video and photography with and by the 'subjects' of research to represent their perspectives on crisis and alternatives from the civil society).</p>
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