Human Behaviour in Africa: a Real Challenge Factor towards Building Smart Cities

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1 ABSTRACT

Traditional behaviours and lack of education are two main elements that lead to resistance for change. However the new approaches of development, especially human centred design helps to break the ice and allow individuals and groups to lead the change by themselves. Humans in general and Africans in particular usually resist change. The old generation is not prepared to adapt and support the change. Using technologies in public services is a burden for them. The resistance for change from all community stakeholders including residents, local authorities and local business can slow down the process and delay the adoption of technology integration urban planification. However the inclusion of all stakeholders in early stages during the policy making process allows the success for change. Therefore, the success of building Smart cities in Africa and Morocco in particular needs to start from civil society integration in the decision making process. The idea needs to come from the people and the city council needs to play the role of the facilitator. Another factor is privacy and identity. Smart cities are defined by locals with limited or no education background as a tool for disconnection from the original culture. In the meantime, the privacy concern relates to collecting personal data of the citizens. Therefore, the city councils need to include this important element in their strategic action plans. Building trust and familiarising citizens with new technologies planned to be integrated in the citizen's daily life is a must. If there is lack of trust on how the personal data is protected during and after the implementation of smart cities' projects, it can lead to total rejection of citizens. Africa continents lack awareness and clear understanding of smart cities. The example of Agadir smart city in Morocco has exposed all mentioned challenges and obstacles. Despite significant investment put by the government and the local council to rebuild Agadir city with integrating technologies to enhance public service and create an environmentally smart city in Morocco. However, the cultural and social factors including societal norms can play a huge role in delaying the implementation of Agadir smart city. This factor will influence the interaction of citizens with integrated technologies in their daily lives. The municipality of Agadir action plan of 2022 to 2027 can be an example of citizens integration in the process of building and implementing smart city initiative through organising consultative meetings with all community stakeholders to have a say about the action plan.

Keywords: cultural and social factors, resistance for change, strategic planning, smart cities, human behaviour

2 THE AGADIR CITY COUNCIL AIMS TO BUILD A SMART CITY THROUGH A MINIMUM INCLUSION OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS

The traditional approach adopted by public institutions in managing public affairs which build on working for citizens instead of working with citizens through linear decision-making lead to failure of development projects. This approach does not prioritise the inclusion of the citizens' needs in all project development phases. This fact leads to the appearance of new modern approaches that respond to the citizens' needs and secures their inclusion. For example, the action plan of Agadir city elected council highlighted important articles from the constitution that called for participation of citizens in the decision-making process. It provided clear statistics of the current situation in all related fields with highlighting objectives to improve it. The language used in the action plan is very simple and represents the participatory approach. Some examples of terms mostly used are: Need assessment, participatory approach, inclusion, participation, governance and communication, constitution, and citizenship budget. The commune called for public consultation meetings where they meet with people from the neighbourhoods to discuss their needs and take their inputs regarding the action plan of the commune from 2023 to 2028. In this regard, the commune organised thematic meetings with various stakeholders to enrich the action plan with the exact need of each sector. The action plan includes a very detailed need assessment that is developed from public consultation meetings with civil society and stakeholders. Furthermore, citizens and associations are invited to facilitate

and manage sports facilities owned by the commune. They called for establishing committees in neighbouring countries for consultation and exchange of sustainable project ideas.

3 PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

There are several participatory approaches that can be adopted by public institutions to secure integration of citizens in the development process. Human Centred Design Thinking is one of them. It is the core approach for CorpsAfrica/Maroc to design and implement the community projects. All volunteers are trained and equipped with the needed skills in design thinking to be able to succeed in their service. The experience provided by CorpsAfrica to its volunteers during pre-service training on design thinking and during in-service experience has a clear impact on the volunteer's mindset. Overall, the design thinking approach is not only guiding NGOs to better define people's needs and come up with social innovative ideas but also changes the mindsets of youth to become more solution-oriented (Brown, T & Wyatt, J. 2010). The experience of CorpsAfrica is believed to be a win-win situation where volunteers develop their professional and life skills on one hand and serve needy communities on the other hand. The president of CorpsAfrica/Maroc stated that "The organisation is aware of poverty and challenges in rural areas where volunteers are placed but they are more into finding solutions in a collaborative way with people of the community (CorpsAfrica/Maroc 2022). The main strength of the design thinking approach is that the three phases do not always proceed in a linear manner. However, it is usually started with inspiration which is mainly about empathising with the people and living their lives to understand and identify their needs (Brown, T & Wyatt, J. 2010). Second, there is the ideation phase which is where you assist the community people in challenging themselves to come up with alternative ideas and solutions. The most important volunteer takeaway from experience is humanity. The project does not happen through volunteers but through them. They work as facilitators and give ownership to the local people (Ideagen Global, 2022). CorpsAfrica/Maroc has a clear impact on communities where volunteers serve for a year. The most important is that the organisation spreads values of team spirit, solution-oriented mindset, problem-solving, and innovation. Furthermore, the organisation works on helping people in these communities find solutions by themselves. Humanity is a major idea for CorpsAfrica in general. Building trust between volunteers and their communities is our priority. It takes time especially since trust in Morocco is very valuable (Seilstad, B. (2022). The communities must contribute 25% of the total budget of each implementing project which secures sustainability and gives the ownership of the people of the community. "Local people helping locals rather than outside savers coming in. Our projects are small scale, but high impact" (Ideagen Global, 2022). They also had to contribute with their ideas to identify needs and come up with solutions. After the success of this approach in Morocco that allowed the change of individuals and groups behaviours, CorpsAfrica expanded its work to 10 African countries.

These modern approaches seek not only the contribution of civil society with its various meanings but the inclusion of all stakeholders of the community in the decision-making process. Therefore, these alternative approaches have been developed and adopted to centralise the citizens in the decision-making process. Yet, there is a clear movement to a more horizontal management approach, especially to local affairs that focuses on building grassroots policies that respond clearly to citizens' needs. As a result, participatory democracy appeared as an additional concept of inclusion to replace representative democracy. The concept of participatory democracy comes to secure the inclusion of citizens not just at the implementation level but at all levels of policy-making processes and project development phases. Through this approach, citizens participate in the preparation, management, and implementation of local development projects. Furthermore, their main responsibility is securing monitoring and evaluation of public policies. The concept of participatory is the key term that switched the traditional role of citizens in the classical representative democracy that ends after citizens votes for their representative to a new role where they practise their rights of being part of the decision-making process and feel the ownership of their community projects.

The constitution enabled civil society to make legislative proposals, submit petitions, and be encouraged to be members of municipalities' consultative councils (Touhtou, 2014). Through its various forms of civil society including associations, non-governmental organisations, and social actors, Morocco's civil society has historically played a vital role in shaping public policies and influencing important decision-making processes. Their role as mediators and counterbalance of power helped to secure the interest of minorities.

Furthermore, it helped to make their voices heard. Civil society played an important role in providing feedback to the government in forming policies and enhancing working practices. Most importantly, civil society has been involved in the constitutional reform of Morocco in contrast to previous reforms, where only political parties and unions were involved. This was the first step of civil society inclusion in the decision-making process. The Moroccan civil society after the reforming of the constitution in 2011 with a clear vision towards a new political approach of leadership, their role has become more important likewise political parties. Their participation is a big sign to participatory democracy. They become able to decide about their local development and the way they want to see their cities.

Several theories see that democracy can serve beyond a form of governance where parties gain legitimacy to represent the citizens after the elections. The elite with huge support by Mosca and Pareto views democracy as a regime that secures the elites to govern and represent the rest of the citizens. They emphasise that democracy is when elites rule and the masses follow. According to them, the rule of citizens ends when they vote for their representative (Kolegar, 1967). In contrast, participatory democracy believers argue that the concept of participatory democracy is a progressive democracy that leads to the inclusion of citizens in the decision-making process. This theory allows the citizens to decide about matters that concern them. Governments with a participatory approach see the inclusion of citizens as a priority, not a choice. Debates over the participatory democracy approach become more intense and become a global concern for policymakers. Yet, it witnessed a new movement toward the concept of participatory democracy at different levels of policymaking. This movement was led by several authors such as Barber and Carole Pateman who debated the inclusion of citizens in decision-making as a big sign of participatory democracy (Held, 2006). Until that time, citizens' rule was considered to be limited to voting and after that, public decision-making was given to elected politicians. Social participation thinkers on the other side see citizens to be centred in the public decision-making process. For them, citizens should be involved in all phases of decision-making processes. In his book Participation and Democratic Theory, published in 1970, Carole discussed the educational role of participation (Pateman, 1970). Pateman is inspired by Rousseau who argues that citizens through participatory democracy learn to put public interests beyond their personal interests while Pateman considers individuals learn through a participatory approach that both private and public concerns go together hand in hand since both are related. He suggests that democracy can be established when citizens are fully engaged and participate in the learning process. Most importantly, Pateman argues that participation starts at the local level where people in small communities govern themselves. Local communities govern themselves following traditional and cultural principles that allow the contribution of all in decision-making. This can be a practice for effective political participation (Pateman, 2012). This paragraph aims to highlight the level of understanding and implication of elected councils to the participatory democracy mechanisms in Morocco. Analysing Agadir city action plan, we can notice that their plan is very strong when it comes to the language use of terms related to participatory democracy. This shows the level of understanding of the constitution articles besides organisational laws by the elected members and teams who worked on developing the action plan. In addition to that, the Agadir action plan is well organised giving priority to people with disabilities, associations in managing public facilities, creation of neighbours' committees for sustainable project ideas, climate change and protection of the environment.

4 REGIONALIZATION IN MOROCCO: EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN CITY DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS

When King Mohamed VI took the throne, he reviewed the regionalisation reforms to rise to the challenge of building a democratic modern state while liberalising the economy (Moyano, 2001). The King gave two speeches setting out the new roadmap of regionalisation, the first one in 2008 and the second in 2010, giving birth to the third wave of regionalisation. This new vision of regionalisation was highlighted by the 2011 constitution as a strategic choice and a lever of change for the future. In 2015, Morocco was divided into twelve regions and the latter were given more financial resources and a broader capacity of decision-making and implementation. Compared to the previous regionalisation efforts, the 2015 regionalisation laws have succeeded in accommodating advanced elements of local democracy (Abdi, 2020). Opposition political parties considered decentralisation as an opportunity to expand their structures at the local level and gain more rents (worldbank, 2009). After the Arab spring, regionalisation was a pressing project that must be implemented. It was an inevitable path towards achieving development and was shaped as a promise to meet the social and economic demands of the people. The guiding principles of the 2015 regionalisation laws were

designed by the consultative commission on regionalisation created in 2010, which included: giving executive powers to the regional councils while alleviating control and tutelage of the Ministry of the interior, implementing participatory democracy and gender equality principles, and enhancing the performance of local governance through integrated development planning and implementation (CCR, 2014).

5 CONCLUSION

All in all, building smart cities in Africa can take a longer process for success. The behavioural aspect of individuals and groups is a big challenge, therefore, the decision maker's need to take into consideration applying participatory approaches in leading change. Among these approaches is Human Centred Design Thinking that allows the opportunity for individuals and groups to lead the change by themselves. This approach secures citizens not to resist the change, sustains the projects and allows innovation and collective work.

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