

The social innovation' influencing factors: *The Case of Casablanca-Settat region*

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Abstract— As an apparent means to solve the Grand Challenges of the 21st Century, several good ideas exist, but they do not all turn into social innovations (SI). In some cases, because they are considered too expensive, or undesirable, or simply because they are not effective compared to existing solutions. This observation raises questions about the existence of several barriers throughout the innovation process and underline a problematic issue which is the role of the various stakeholders, particularly the local authorities, in tackling the socio-economic challenges through social innovation. Indeed, the main aims of this paper are: to explore the essence of social innovation, to identify the factors influencing the process of social innovation and to confront the theory and the reality within the Casablanca-Settat region.

Tough, it seems that theoretically the fact of focusing on the factors which influence the SI process will improve our understanding of how social innovation could take place in reality. That, consequently, could greatly enhance interventions aimed at increasing the implementation, efficiency and sustainability of social innovation in regional development practices.

Thus, by following a qualitative method and mobilizing theoretical inputs and data collection, we intend to explore the concept regionally and to emphasize the growing need for social innovation in Morocco and mainly in terms of regional development – Casablanca-Settat region-.

Keywords— Social Innovation, grand societal challenges, regional development, the influencing factors.

I. INTRODUCTION

The actual Moroccan situation is increasing the public policy interest towards innovation. While we have witnessed, for a long time, the predominance of the technological innovation concept, in the recent years we have noticed a shift leading to a more social concept, associated to the grand societal challenges, social change, and sustainable development. This shift, still marginal in Morocco, explains the limited research on social innovation, unlike the existing work on technological innovation.

Simultaneously, fulfilling the unmet social needs is a particular requirement at a juncture where our economic and social models are being jeopardized, in particular because of the current profound challenges, confirmed also by the King' speech of the parliament opening in 13th October 2017: "...Although Morocco has made tangible progress, which is

recognized throughout the world, we have to admit that our national development model no longer responds to citizens' growing demands and pressing needs; it has not been able to reduce disparities between segments of the population, correct inter-regional imbalances or achieve social justice...".

This national situation is marked by the increasing social and economico-spatial inequalities, the social exclusion, poverty (11.7% at the national level According to 'HAUT COMMISSARIAT AU PLAN' (HCP)), unemployment (10,2 % in 2017 according to 'Banque Mondiale'), the popular riots (alhoucama, Jrada, zagoura ...), the inflation (Bank Al-Maghrib had forecast an inflation rate of 1.5% and 1.6% for 2018 and 2019), the deterioration of the purchasing power, etc. But it is also backed up by citizens', civil society actors' and companies' initiatives that simply require a favorable environment to implement their ideas and to provide meaningful responses to these challenges.

These responses entail a collective action that joins the attention of the regions to socially innovative initiatives co-constructed with users, in accordance with the specificities of each territory' ground reality. Hence, the territorial aspect of the social innovation.

The present paper aims at discussing the different perspectives, the conceptions and the various influencing factors of social innovation through a theoretical and empirical angle, and in turn provide our own understanding of this broad topic in the region of Casablanca-Settat.

This paper is organized as follows. Chapter II gives a brief literature review of the concept of social innovation. This preliminary analysis leads to the conclusion that there are two fundamental definitions of social innovation: an outcome-based one and a process-based one. In chapter III, we develop the various social innovation influencing factors within the theoretical aspect whereas chapter IV focuses on the social innovation' practical side through the case study of Casablanca-Settat region, which is home to 6,861,739 inhabitants (According to the general population census conducted by HCP in 2014 in Morocco) and includes the economic capital of Morocco "Casablanca".

II. SOCIAL INNOVATION' LITERATURE REVIEW:

This chapter aims to discuss the existing research about social innovation, define the term and identify its different approaches, in order to review the essence of the concept.

A. Multidisciplinary approach

In the mainstream social science literature of the 1990s, the concept of social innovation alludes as a matter of first importance to the transformation of organizations and their social links so as to extend their effectiveness. But what about the literature on this subject before the 1990s? Keeping in mind the end goal to answer this inquiry, we must return to the debate on innovation in the economic sciences, a discipline which, in interaction with the management and sociology of organizations, has monopolized the theorization of innovation in companies. Joseph Schumpeter - considered as the reference for the analysis of innovation in economics - was the first to underline the necessity of social innovation in order to ensure the effectiveness of technological innovation (Schumpeter, 1932, 1942; see also Becker et al., 2002).

In contemporary social sciences, the notion of social innovation is growing in interest; be that as it may, a deepening of the discussion is by all accounts required. We have distinguished four areas in which the concept is either mobilized or analyzed. The first area is management sciences. In this context, the focus is on the role of "improvements" in social capital that can foster better functioning of organizations in the economy, with beneficial outcomes on social innovation in the non-profit sector. F. Damanpour (1991) tests the pertinence of several existing innovation theories with a specific end goal to advance towards a superior comprehension of organizational innovation.

The second area is somewhat a multidisciplinary approach, consolidating management practices and scientific research, which scrutinizes the complex relationships between business success and social and environmental progress.

The third area is within the arts and creativity sciences, and spotlights on the role of social innovation in intellectual and social creation. The key article concerning this area is by M. Mumford (2002), characterizes social innovation as "*the generation and implementation of new ideas about how people should organize interpersonal activities, or social interactions, to meet one or more common goals. As with other forms of innovation, the production resulting from social innovation may vary with regard to their breadth and impact*".

The fourth area concerns social innovation in territorial development. Moulaert et al (1992, 1997, 2002) features different local development issues in the framework of European cities, and in order to tackle them, he proposes organizing neighborhood development in step with the Integrated Area Development approach, which intently connects the spheres of social development and the main actors (mainly civil society organizations) as stated by the structuring concept of social innovation. The latter one

associates the satisfaction of human needs to innovation in social governance processes, emphasizing specifically the importance of socio-political capacity and access to the necessary resources to satisfy human needs, incorporating dynamic participation in decision-making within local political or administrative structures that are regularly an obstructing component (Moulaert, Martinelli, Swyngedouw and Gonzalez, 2005).

And in the framework of territorial development, social innovation can be outlined both as an outcome and as a process (Chesbrough, Vanhaverbeke et al. (2006), simply like innovation in general (Deakins & Freel, 2009). For example, in a recent online open book, Murray and al. (2010) consider that: "*Our interest is in innovations that are social both in their ends and in their means. Specifically, we define social innovations as new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act*". This clarification concerning social innovation emphasizes both the outcome and the process aspects, which we will develop in the next two sections.

B. Social innovation as an outcome

Most approaches defining social innovation adopt a standardizing perspective, with deference to its outcome. In this context, Phills and al. (2008), recommend the subsequent definition of social innovation which plainly distinguishes social innovation from other types of innovation. They explain social innovation as: "*A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals*". This definition highlights the importance of the object, i.e. the aftereffect of innovation with no regard for the process which prompted this result. Additionally, this definition is made of three sections each revealing insight into a particular dimension of the concept of social innovation. Primarily, according to these authors, "*to be considered an innovation, a process or outcome must meet two criteria*".

The first is novelty: Although innovations don't really require to be unique, they must be new to the user, context, or application.

The second criterion is improvement. To be viewed as an innovation, a process or outcome must be either more effective or more efficient than prior options. To this list of improvements we include more sustainable or more just. By sustainable we mean solutions that are environmentally as well as organizationally sustainable those -"*that can keep on working over a long period of time*" (Phills, Deiglmeier and al., 2008)-. The criterion of novelty above-cited is not new in the literature on innovation. In this sense, Schumpeter (1934) already defines economic development as a "*process of carrying out new combinations in the production process*".

Secondly, according to Phills and al. (2008), social means the new alternative should particularly and clearly address a social issue, i.e. a situation which impacts negatively people's lives and well-being.

Third, the value generated by this novel solution is not principally caught by individuals or companies for their own personal profit but reasonably goes to society in general. So, the main mission of any social innovation must be lined to the social value rather than private value. Indeed, “*many innovations tackle social problems or meet social needs, but only for social innovations is the distribution of financial and social value tilted toward society as a whole*” (Phills, Deiglmeier et al., 2008). Though, as indicated by Lévesque (2001), social innovation does not always concern an unsatisfactory social situation (e.g. joblessness, poverty, etc.) however, it can also be a response to a social aspiration for a different society (more democratic, more environment-friendly, etc).

C. Social innovation as a process

From a process perspective, the subsequent step resides in understanding the process of social innovation. From our literature review, the first idea that appears is “*the starting point for innovation is the awareness of a need that is not being met*” (Mulgan, 2007). Actually, the emergence of social innovation seems to be associated to specific conditions in the socio-economic framework of a certain society. Such contexts generally reveal the market and/or state failures to appropriately answer peoples’ needs. Indeed, history shows us that this type of initiatives are made as a reaction to the important unsatisfied needs, they respond to a “*condition of necessity*” (Defourny & Develtere, 2009).

A second characteristic that seems as crucial within the process of social innovation is the involvement of a complex network of formal and/or informal partnerships between different stakeholders, i.e. “*In most cases the success of the innovation will rest on the participation and involvement of a wide variety of interests – the users and beneficiaries of the innovation as well as the producers and suppliers*” (Murray et al., 2010). And According to Mulgan (2007), “*some of the most effective methods for cultivating social innovation start from the presumption that people are competent interpreters of their own lives and competent solvers of their own problems*”. The involvement of beneficiaries in different is a very important condition for the accomplishment of the initiative. The notion of empowerment which is based on the idea that individuals and/or groups can acquire the skills to make the needed transformations in order to improve their own lives is essential to this conception of social innovation. According to the work of Mulgan (2006 & 2007), there are four stages in the process of social innovation. We concisely describe them hereafter.

The first stage is to specify the unmet need, then, the actors investigate in order to develop an innovative strategy that will contribute to find a solution to the problem, to meet the need or to achieve their aspiration.

According to Mulgan (2006), “*the second phase of any innovation process involves taking a promising idea and testing it in practice*”. Once the strategy is developed, the actors generally begin the experimentation phase, during which they attempt, through various means, to implement the new approach, the new service or to make the new product

available. This phase can vary depending on the project, the environment, on the number of actors involved and the target group. The experimentation phase can be divided into two main steps: informal experimentation (e.g., trials and errors, informal evaluation/adjustment) or formal experimentation (e.g., pilot project, formal experimentation, theoretical application, knowledge transfer, formal evaluation / updating / codification). Often, during this phase, the actors adjust the strategy developed in order to better respond to the needs expressed by stakeholders, users or beneficiaries.

In this third phase, a social innovation only exists when it is appropriated by an institution, organization or community, on a scale:

- Proximity: appropriation by lessees during and after the experimentation phase. This concerns the appropriation at a micro level (within an organization, at local/regional level).

- In a broad sense: The appropriation by a greater number of lessees often as a result of experimentation or formal transfers. Innovation is being spread to other organizations, other regions, and even internationally.

And it is essential to underline that “*...some go quickly to scale and then have to adapt fast in the light of experience; often, the end use of an innovation will be very different from the one that was originally envisaged; sometimes action precedes understanding and sometimes taking action crystallizes the idea. And always there is an iterative circling back as new insights change the nature of the innovation*” (Murray, Caulier-Grice et al., 2010).

Finally, the last stage in the process of social innovation highlights the importance of the dissemination or the diffusion.

“*What does it mean to diffuse? It's about valuing. There are two ways: 1) exchange value, therefore market value 2) use value, which is not marketable, no market. If people use it, even if it's not sold, if it starts to multiply, at that moment, it is valued. If there is no valorization, there is no innovation*”.

In this extract, Benoît Lévesque explains that the dissemination and transfer are essential activities for the social innovation process. Spreading innovation means that it is important to get it recognized, to sell it, to give it an added value, market or usage value. The objective of these activities is to promote the innovative strategy implemented. Thus, social innovation is more likely to spread to other areas in need.

III. THE FACTORS INFLUENCING SOCIAL INNOVATION

Social innovation is influenced by elements that are external to the organization (macro factors), elements that are specific to the organization (meso factors) and elements that are specific to individuals (micro factors) (Damanpour F., 1991, 1996; Damanpour F., Schneider M., 2006). This makes it a complex concept. These determinants can be defined as key elements for the development and reinforcement of social innovation. Therefore, it is imperative to have a better understanding of these factors and their impact on social innovation.

A. The external factors

PEST analysis summarizes adequately the various external factors that influence the social innovation process.

Political and legal factors: involve mainly policy agendas and legal recognition of social innovation.

Several authors argue that the lack of political and legal recognition is an obstacle to social innovation (Glanzel et al., 2013; Hubert et al., 2011; Dobele, 2015). In this context, Hubert et al. point out the absence of a "common framework to define important sectors and players such as social entrepreneurs and enterprises, or third sector or non-profit sectors. Moreover, those concerned with addressing social demands are not necessarily innovators, while many business innovators do address social demands" This lack of recognition has repercussions on several levels: lack of data to assess the impact of social innovations, access to funds...

Economic factors: Social innovators generally need resources with very low or no return expectations, which require the availability of funds and a certain degree of autonomy in decision-making also. So, in general, the high dependence of third sector organizations on grants can hinder the implementation of social innovations.

In terms of financial reasons, A. Hubert et al. (2011) explain the reasons why funding social innovation is defying: Social innovation tends to be bottom-up, it is problematic in the measurement of its impact, it is not perceived as self-sustainable/replicable"...

Social and cultural factors: Many authors tend to give these factors an important place in the development of social innovations (Hubert et al., 2011; Mulgan et al., 2006). Generally, these are:

- The lack of data concerning Social Innovation
- The fear of innovation, risk of changes
- Values and norms -or 'people's minds'-
- Collaboration skills –between different stakeholders-

Technological factors: Information and communication technologies facilitate the exchange of information and experiences. Indeed, a study by Hynes (2009) highlights the importance of the Internet as a factor affecting positively social innovation.

B. The organizational factors

At the center of the process of social innovation is the innovating organization because social innovation very often appears from social enterprise and NGO (Leadbeater, 2007). Social innovation is linked to many barriers at the organizational level: social innovation management, resources, level of risk, organizational culture...

Some of organizational barriers are related to uncertainty which characterizes the social innovation process. Here, G. Mulgan et al. (2006) emphasize the significant role the public

sector can have in being supportive, to initiatives socially innovative, against the problems due to risk.

C. The individual factors

In this level, social innovation depends on the knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, motivations and attitudes of individuals (Dufour S. et al., 2014).

The following figure summarizes the proposed model, which incorporates the three levels of analysis.

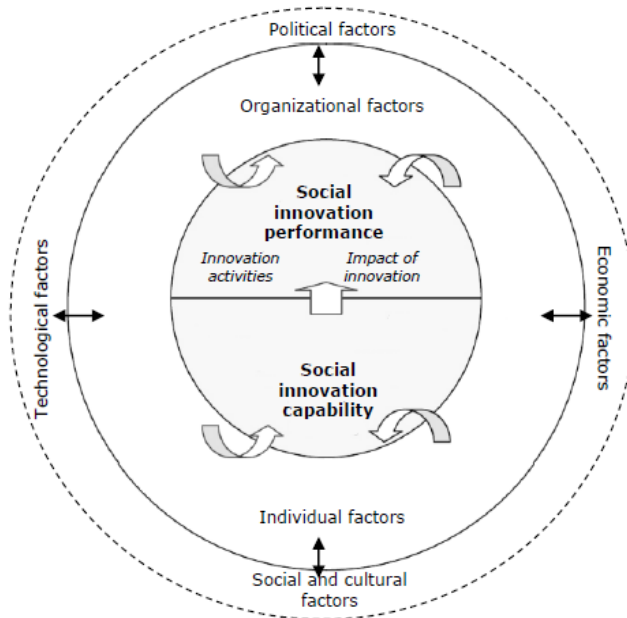


Fig. 1. Social innovation influencing factors model

Source: Dobele, 2015

In the following chapter we will therefore focus on highlighting the factors influencing social innovation in the Casablanca-Settat region, allowing us to analyze its innovation' potential.

IV. CASE STUDY: CASABLANCA-SETTAT REGION

The purpose of this section is to propose an empirical confrontation of the model presented above (Figure 1), in order to reveal the potential for social innovation in the Casablanca-Settat region.

A. Methodology

The research methodology used here is based on a qualitative, descriptive and exploratory approach. Konstantos, Siatitsa and Vaiou (2013) recommend the qualitative approach in social innovation research, as the qualitative methods enable to fully explore and analyze the nature and characteristics of SI.

The data collection is based on a combination of three sources: internal documents, semi-structured interviews conducted between July and October 2018 among various stakeholders (mainly representing the public sector and NGOs) and direct observation (participation in meetings, working

sessions, etc.). The institutions represented by the interviewees are:

- Wilaya de Casablanca-Settat (Direction des affaires administratives et du développement humain)
- Conseil Régional Casablanca-Settat
- Préfecture d'arrondissement Ain Sebaa Hay Mohamadi (Division de l'action sociale)
- Délégation régionale de l'entraide nationale
- Mouvement 'Les Citoyens'
- Association 'Ambitions jeunes'
- Association 'Mama Aziza'
- Association 'Médaille d'or'

B. Main results

Despite the growing need of social innovation in the region, it seems that its process still faces several obstacles:

Misunderstanding of the concept of social innovation: The misunderstanding of the concept of "social innovation" was identified as a key barrier by the majority of stakeholders in the Casablanca-Settat region. Recognition of the term "social innovation" by public servants, the public, partners and beneficiaries is considered weak. There are also problems of perception. For example, some interviewees associate the term "social innovation" with simple social activities and programs to help vulnerable people. Some negative stereotypes also affect the broader perception of social innovations. Misunderstanding and lack of awareness negatively affect social innovations and its funding prospects.

The lack of mechanisms to measure and demonstrate the impact of socially innovative projects: Currently, the measurement and reporting of the social impact of these actors is very limited. As a result, there is a lack of information on the societal impact of these organizations. The impact must be demonstrated to funders and investors. The development of social impact measures could lead to greater transparency and responsibility, and better recognition of the impact of social organizations, to generate more interest from private and public investors.

Access to finance: Investors generally do not understand the dual purpose and hybrid economic models of social innovators. However, specialized investors, intermediaries and financial instruments are currently non-existent or underdeveloped in the Casablanca-Settat region apart from public funds.

The economic environment is considered by many to be a constraint for the development of social innovations due to restrictions on public spending, which remains the dominant source of social organizations.

The lack of support measures specifically designed for social innovations such as incubators, mentoring and training programs, investment readiness support, etc. The support needs of most social innovators are similar to those of traditional organizations, but they also have special characteristics (their dual mission, business models, target groups, sectors of activity, etc.) that generate complex needs that require diversified and sometimes tailor-made solutions.

In the Casablanca-Settat region, specialized support for social innovators is largely absent and, when it exists, it is limited.

Lack of a favorable legislative framework: The lack of legal recognition of social innovation in the region makes it difficult for authorities to design and target specialized support.

The absence of mechanisms or platforms for networking to concretize the shared efforts and spread social innovations. Many initiatives were developed throughout the Casablanca-Settat region but often did not go beyond the local level, which is quite unfortunate since many projects could be developed effectively somewhere else.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Despite a growing interest in social innovation and increasing social innovation projects, the state, size and scale of social innovations are still poorly understood. Social innovation capability is a set of components that facilitate and support social innovation performance. This capability is influenced by external, organizational and individual factors. This means that social innovation could only develop and realize its potential if the right preconditions - external, organizational and individual - are met.

The general environment in the region under study is currently considered by many as a constraint to the emergence and development of social innovations. In this context, public authorities have a key role to play in order to encourage the SI. The local level is the most relevant in this regard. The local authorities are encouraged to: recognize the importance and necessity of social innovations, contribute to the creation of a conceptual consciousness, analyze in concrete terms the needs that are not met on their territory and which therefore require innovation, mobilize specialized financial instruments to meet the objectives of social innovation. Finally, to set up a platform that networks innovators (civil society, governments, private companies, etc.) and thus allows them to exchange ideas and disseminate best practices.

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