

Social Change Mechanisms and the Role of Media in Promoting the Citizenship Among the Urban Residents in Algeria

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Received: November 29, 2022

Accepted: December 20, 2022

Published: December 23, 2022

Abstract

The anomalous social and environmental phenomena spread in most urban milieux in Algeria goes back mainly to the social deviance witnessed among urban residents. That is due to historical, social, and economical reasons in addition to the absence of integrated strategies and a failure on the part of media in performing its role in accordance with the necessary scientific and practical methods to shape the public opinion and influence it, promoting citizenship, fostering the sense of belonging in different categories, and building the individual and collective consciousness. In order to make a social change, it is necessary to follow the scientific approaches and mechanisms to change the individual's mindset and create a collective consciousness with a sense of belonging and more loyalty to the urban space and the home country. It also requires an ongoing accompaniment of different media with thoughtfully studied information and advertising programmes, in which citizenship concepts and foundations are clarified in order to promote the sense of citizenship, foster loyalty and fidelity to the urban space, and preserving it as well as the whole home country.

Key words: urban milieux, urban residents, citizenship, social change, collective consciousness.

INTRODUCTION

The social reality of urban residents' practices and behaviours in different Algerian cities shows the complete absence of collective consciousness, which makes the individual and the group give more importance to the social and environmental public life in the different Algerian cities. The individual now lives for himself and protects his interest without caring for the public milieu and space, where it is witnessed excesses that impacted negatively the environmental side through the spread of dirt and wastes randomly thrown in all public spaces and residential neighbourhoods. Adding to that is the unethical practices which contradicts the general morals practised in all interactions in all public sites and spaces. Therefore, we find that the public good is not among the priorities of the vast majority of the city residents and that there is an absence of urbanity in the practices and behaviours of different social categories. It is the thing that led to the appearance of unfamiliar social phenomena to the Algerian society. Among them are the spread of residues and household wastes, the prevalence of crime with its different types, and the widespread of drug and hallucinogen consumption among the youth in the majority of cities.

All these social phenomena appear in a phase where different media and social media spread in a never seen before way. Its impact, however, did not transcend to the level which real urbanity requires, where civil societies share fine social values, groups of different backgrounds coexist, priority is given to the public good, and common privacy is respected among all urban citizens.

The present situation requires from us searching the causing factors of this dangerous social deviance from which the urban life is suffering. It is what necessitate seeking the real reasons behind the deviation of the individual and the group, not giving importance to the urban and social environment, and the preference of the individual interest and attempting to know the role of media in treating this anomalous social situation. What are the possible mechanisms to fix the behaviour and practices of the individual, changing the general public situation, promoting the citizenship values, and fostering the sense of belonging to the urban milieux?

To answer these inquiries, research must be conducted on the causing factors of producing this unfamiliar social situation to our urban societies.

Reasons of Social Deviance and Non-Maintenance of Urban Environment in Algerian Cities

Through analysing the social situation, it appears that the reasons are multiple, and we try to restrict them in the following:

Historical Reasons

The negative individual and collective behaviours toward all that is public property, where it is faced with indifference and carelessness and even reaches intentional destruction throughout history is due to what the Algerian society had been exposed to in different phases and historical periods from invasion and colonisation. The goods and fortunes and of the country back then were robbed, the society with all its categories was subjugated, tribute and taxes were forced, and all those fortunes were exploited for the sake of invaders and colonisers. All of that led to creating a sense of vengeance towards all that is property of these intruders on the society to take revenge from subjugation and deprivation that they suffered from and which made them lose the sense of belonging to all that is public property thinking that the spaces, equipment, and grassroots structures are a property of the colonising authority of the country. This sense remained inherited due to the society losing the justice principal in fortune distribution, benefitting from the country incomes, the disproportion of levels of benefit from different public services from different successive authorities governing the country.

Economical-Social Reasons

It is natural that the higher the economic situation of the individual gets the more he cares about the public affair seeking leisure and entertainment spaces in his life, and the lower his economic situation gets, the less he is able to fulfil his basic needs. This increased the social vulnerability and made the individual cares for himself and spends all his time looking with different ways to fulfil his needs and attempting to improve his living conditions far from sane values. This may lead him to adopt deviant ways impacting him and the society, especially that the environment in which he lives does not secure him future prospects. It is the actual matter lived by vast categories of the Algerian society, which became careless about the public affair. In fact, among them are those which pursued the path of drug and hallucinogens consumption, which spread in a terrifying manner in different categories milieux of the Algerian society and caused committing dangerous crimes that has never spread in such a manner.

Educational Reasons

The educational system makes the founding brick in societies building. Regarding the circumstances in which Algeria has passed through due to the colonisation, which worked to make the society ignorant and not allowing it to study and acquire knowledge, the Algerian authorities invested in the education sector and worked on bringing professors and teachers from many countries in order to teach its compatriots through an educational system with national programmes. It did not, however, meet the aspirations of the society regarding the instability it has witnessed due to the back-and-forth pulls in the education sector between francophones and arabophones, which did not work to foster the citizenship sense and preserve the national identity. The change in the content of educational programmes negatively impacted the upbringing of generations who did not study in their educational programmes the foundations of real citizenship.

Political and Legal Reasons

The totalitarian and single-party political system have negatively impacted in the incapacity of building the individual and the society with an advanced sense of citizenship due to the unacceptance of differences and variety in opinions. It is what created a withdrawal in serving the public good and the sense of belonging. In fact, the sense of marginalisation and unacceptance became prevailing among vast categories of the society due to not listening to their opinions and suggestions on how to govern the public affair. No rules have been outlined to secure the real and wide participation of the society in choosing the mechanisms of governing its political, social, cultural, and economic affairs at different levels.

The Absence of Targeted Media

Among the important reasons behind not creating a collective consciousness in Algeria is the role of media directed according to priorities of the system which is specified to create a citizen distinguished with loyalty and fidelity to the system and not to the home country as a space. It is the thing that we are living since independence where media is subject to strict security control authority in all what it broadcasts or writes. The matter even reached controlling social media, and all who violate the system or object to it receives different punishments that may reach imprisonment.

Rules have been dedicated to the matter at the measure of the ruling system, the thing that do not serve the creation of the individual and collective consciousness. In fact, it was capable of growing fear among individuals of the society, which is the biggest barrier in front of fostering the sense of citizenship and increasing the sense of alienation in a country where the human being does not own the least of the real freedom of speech fundamentals to express his opinions and not in the formal way the system and its authority wanted.

Mechanisms of Social Change and Promotion of Citizenship and the Sense of Belonging in the Urban Milieux

In order to make a social change in which social stability is achieved, all the contributing parts in building the human being and society must react starting from the family to all other actors from authorities and public bodies. That is in order to outline a comprehensive and integrated strategy to create the individual consciousness and develop it into a collective one in which priority is given to promote citizenship and foster the sense of belonging to the society from one side and to the space from another side. For the sake of achieving that, all parts must realise the real concepts to the meaning of change and its types in addition to realising the concept of citizenship in order to convince everybody with the importance of it in building the individual, immunise the group, and give more importance and priority to the public good over the private interest.

The Concept of Social Change

Social change is the transition of a society from usual behaviours to new behaviours and practices different from those accustomed to in the society.

Types of Change

Automatic Change

It is the transformation that happens to the individual through getting older or to the society through the increase of the population and other dynamic factors in a natural way in the human life.

Planned Change

It is the transformation that occurs according to a specific planning by the individual himself or by a group or certain bodies with previously determined and outlined objectives. This change requires specific conditions to be achieved.

Conditions of Planned Change

The social planned change depends on two main conditions:

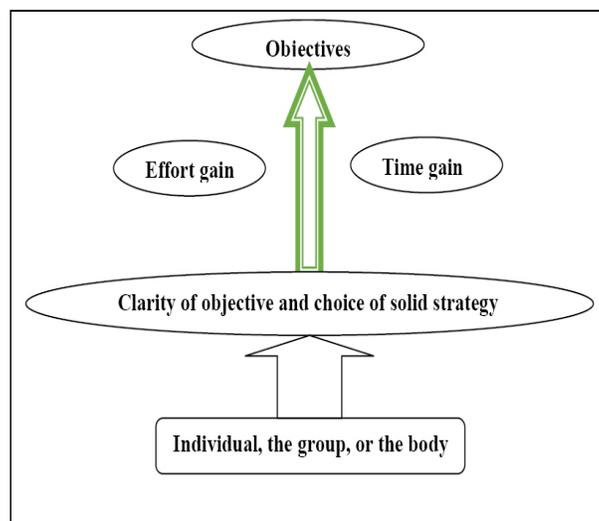
Determining the Goals

To embody the change, it is obligatory to determine clear and understood objectives among the individual, the group, or the body that intended the change.

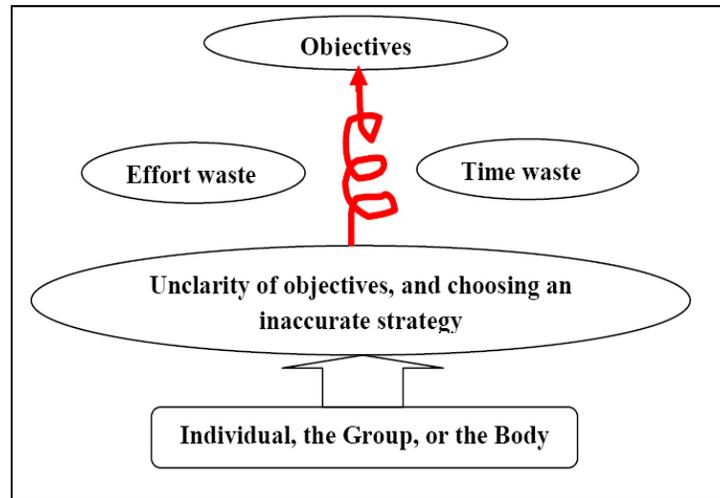
Choosing a Strategy to Achieve the Objectives

This is accomplished through scrutinising the means that corresponds the nature of objectives and the course of its pursuit. The time period of achieving the objectives depends on the following cases:

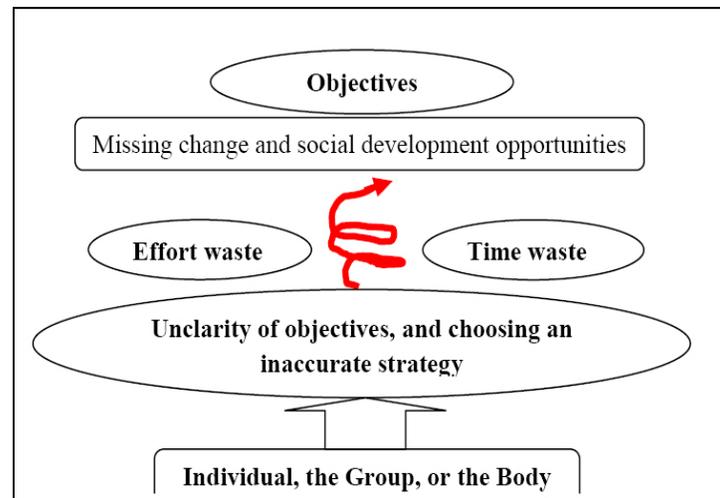
First Case



Second Case



Third case



The Role of Media in Fostering the Citizenship Values

Media is considered a very important mean in building the awareness of the individual and the society and enabling them from acquiring the ability to analyse and make right decisions concerning different local and national issues. That is through the media content targeted towards the public opinion, which can also foster the citizenship values among the society individuals if used in a positive way and not to shake the scale of values, question the national identity, and support the liberal values, escape, separation, and national unity strike.

The media campaigns have a big influence whether in making a change or promoting the sense of citizenship and loyalty to the urban milieu or home country. The more their programmes are studied and in sane and solid planification according to scientific and practical bases, the more their results are positively influential, responded to by vast milieux of the society, and able to change the old behaviours and practices.

Also, the more information and advertising programmes are made in a succinct and careful way, the more they gained potential in creating the individual and collective consciousness and fostering the sense of loyalty and fidelity to the milieux in which one lives and to the home country to which he belongs. In fact, they foster his fundamentals, protection of the land, and devotion of the values of belonging, and consolidation of sacrifice, redemption, and unity and raise through it in behaviour and practice among the individual and the society, the thing that immunise him from internal and external dangers.

For the citizenship promotion campaigns to succeed by the different media, it must be of clear objectives with a content that focuses mainly on:

- Showing the role of citizenship and its importance in providing the public framework of life to all residents.

- Fostering the values of citizenship, loyalty, and belonging to the home country.
- Instilling the values of fidelity and sacrifice for the sake of the home country.
- Emphasising the importance of national identity and fostering it.
- Fostering the solidarity between the different society segments, which leads to fostering the cohesion of the society and its social fabric.
- Urging the commitment to virtue ethics and public fine morals.
- Encouraging the individual and collective work in all what can build the country, rise it, and flourish it.
- Distancing from spreading all value conflict forms in the society.

The impact of the different media messages broadcasted by different media means, which adopt in its informational content the concept of real citizenship, can shape a typical image in the minds of the receivers and build a concept of the relation which connects the individual to his space and home country. Therefore, it fosters his sense of belonging to the society and home country and activate his role in all social, economic, political, and cultural life aspects.

Media can also influence the individual and society and work to promote the individual and collective sense of citizenship through focusing on the following:

Development of Political Awareness

That is through building an individual who is aware of his right in practicing his political right, enabling him to participate in choosing the political programmes which he sees appropriate to serve his interest and the good of his society and home country, and showing him the extent to which he can participate in making the local and national decision through the political upbringing performed by the political parties according to their orientations and vision to the political work.

Fostering the Social Participation

Media has an important role in building the collective consciousness and showing its importance in private and public life of the residents, and that is through building an individual who assumes his responsibility within the group and participate in what he is obliged to participate it from duties to the milieu and the home country in which he lives.

Achieving the Comprehensive Integration

It is very important that the programmes adopted by media focus on clarifying the operation of harmony and homogeneity within the social, cultural, political existence in which the individual lives, the thing that grows in him the sense of real belonging to the society and milieu in which he lives.

Achieving the Principal of Freedom, Justice, and Transparency

It is considered among the most important pillars to promote awareness and foster the sense of belonging and loyalty within the individual and the group, where all the members of the society feel the equality in rights and duties in spite of their different backgrounds and references. It is what foster their fidelity, loyalty, and citizenship to the milieu and home country in which they live.

In order for the media to able to perform its role in creating the individual and collective consciousness, it has to adopt in its information and advertising programmes the definition of the concept of citizenship with its different dimensions and basic pillars according to the following:

The Concept of Citizenship

It is that relationship that starts between the individual and the state with all that it takes of duties and rights adjusted by the outlined laws to secure the straightness of the relationship and its discipline by both parts. It is also considered a political-social relationship with a multi-dimensional human dimension influenced by the level of cultural and political maturity and awareness and the extent of the urban progress, inherited values, and the local and international influences which witness a constant change.

Dimensions of Citizenship

The Cognitive-Cultural Dimension

knowledge represents an important component in rising the individual's level of awareness. The more his knowledge and education increase, the higher his cultural level gets, the thing makes him very aware of his duties towards his urban space in specific and towards his home country in general.

The Skilful Dimension

Skills are considered an important part in the life of the individual. It makes him acquire the capacity to differentiate between what is beneficial to him and to his environment and urban space so he can perform his role more effectively and usefully to the milieu he lives in.

The Social Dimension

The interaction of the individual with his social environment produces relationships in which ideas shape and turn into social projects where the sense of belonging to the milieu is devoted and his belonging to his environment is fostered.

The Value and Religious Dimensions

The upbringing according to the scale of values and religious teachings is considered among the important factors in acquiring and developing the collective consciousness which prioritise to the public good over the individual interest.

The Spatial Dimension

The milieu in which the individual lives is considered the container which hosts the social environment where the individual grows. A strong bond with it is therefore created, the thing that makes him care for this dimension which guarantees to him living in security and safety.

The Modernist Dimension

The modern dimension in the urban milieu is considered a transition from the traditional social bonds which base itself mainly on blood relations and family and tribal ties to a new relational system where the individual gradually gives away the traditional relations and replaces it with interest relations and search for new institutions which guarantee him living in safety and in modern living methods corresponding with the life in the city. It creates occupational organisations, civil associations, and political parties that work on fulfilling the needs of the individual in the urban milieu far from what he lived earlier in the rural milieu.

Citizenship Pillars

Fostering citizenship among the members of the society stands on a number of pillars, most importantly are:

The Democracy of the Political System

The democratic political participation is considered among the most important frames that makes the people choose its representatives in a transparent way and in all freedom to manage both its local and national affairs. It fosters in all members of the society the sense of belonging to their home country and urban milieu and their constant strive to serve it and sacrifice for it.

Building a Strong Civil Society

The urban society is considered the main host for citizenship. In it, the correct social upbringing is done through different institutions. The family, the school, the mosque, and different public institutions take care of building the collective consciousness that secures the welfare of each member of the society's life.

The Level of Effective Sustainable Development

The advancement of the economic, social, cultural, and environmental development level guarantees the comfortable living framework to all categories of the society as it fosters more and more the sense of citizenship among all members of the society and increase their sense of belonging to the society and the space in which they live.

Free Media to a Real Citizenship Devotion

Media is considered one of the most important pillars to spread awareness and promote citizenship among the residents. That is through activating the role of all actors in creating the public life through the real and effective participation to all categories of the society, which increases their sense of belonging to their spatial environment and their feeling of citizenship.

CONCLUSION

The struggle of urban residents is clearly apparent because of the carelessness that the public spaces suffer from, the spread of household wastes, and the prevalence of unusual social phenomena to the Algerian society. The studies have shown that the situation goes back to many reasons among them are the historical, the social, and the economical. In addition to that is the non-adoption of public policies that work on promoting citizenship by the successive bodies on governing the country affairs, which did not embrace in their developmental programmes the social aspect of the residents. they

were striving to fulfil the basic needs ignoring the sociological and psychological studies of the society. Moreover, there is no accompaniment of the media to the public policies and no adoption of targeted information programmes that work on promoting the sense of citizenship and fostering the sense of belonging and loyalty to the space in the society milieu. It is the thing that produced a deviant social situation according to the scale of urban sane values. The matter cannot be corrected, and the social change cannot be created unless through adopting a comprehensive strategy that depends on modern scientific and practical mechanisms and tools in recreating the individual and collective consciousness, promoting the sense of citizenship and giving priority to the public good before the individual interest in order to preserve the public properties, respect the general morals, and fight the social ills and deviant behaviours. That will not be achieved unless with the accompaniment of different media through adopting information and advertisement programmes focusing in its content on presenting the correct concept of citizenship and its right bases and the extent of its importance in promoting the sense of citizenship and fostering loyalty and fidelity to the urban space in specific and to the home country in general.

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Citation: Dr. Athmane AZIZI, Dr. Saida BAH. Social Change Mechanisms and the Role of Media in Promoting the Citizenship Among the Urban Residents in Algeria. Int J Innov Stud Sociol Humanities. 2022;7(12): 168-174. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2456-4931.071216>.

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