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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Spread of the Phenomenon of Illegal Immigration among Youth and Its Impact on Local Development

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
  *Corresponding Author: Salem-yakoub@univ-eloued.dz	This paper aims to raise one of the pivotal issues that has occupied the global arena: the phenomenon of illegal migration among young people ", the latter, which has seen a marked increase in recent times and in various illicit images and methods due to many circumstances and political factors, Economic and social deterioration and grave obstacles to development and prosperity, particularly in North African countries, including Algeria. Accordingly, we seek to raise one of the most important social problems arising from illegal migration, which is reflected in the latter's implications for local development.

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the phenomenon of illegal immigration is a complex issue with humanitarian, economic, social, and security dimensions. The question arises: why has its rate increased in recent years? The pace of illegal immigration has intensified due to the rise of conflicts, wars, and instability, particularly in Arab countries and African states. Additionally, the exacerbation of poverty, high unemployment rates in many developing countries, and the deterioration of their social structures especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and some Asian nations—have contributed to this trend. These dire living conditions have widened the economic disparity between the Global North and South, leading to growing dissatisfaction with living standards among the youth in these impoverished countries.

The technological revolution, particularly the widespread availability of social media and satellite channels, has made it easier for these young people to be exposed to the allure of a prosperous and comfortable life in developed nations. Consequently, this heightened dissatisfaction has driven them to seek migration by any means possible. Their decisions regarding illegal immigration are further reinforced by real or exaggerated success stories that reach the ears of these poor, deprived, and unemployed young people.

It is also undeniable that one of the fundamental reasons behind illegal immigration is the issue of underdevelopment, marginalization, and the wastage of human potential that many citizens in African countries experience in general.

In light of the above, this research paper aims to address the phenomenon of immigration in terms of:

- The structural and functional characteristics of illegal immigration.
- The structural and functional characteristics of local development.
- The impact of illegal immigration on local development.

First: Conceptual Framework:

1. The Concept of Illegal Immigration:

The phenomenon of migration, in general, is as old as humanity itself. Humans have known migration since ancient times; it is even considered one of their inherent characteristics. Linguistically, the word "migration" comes from the root "hajr," which means separation or detachment, and migration refers to moving from one land to another. Among the Arabs, migration originally referred to the movement of Bedouins from the desert to cities. Migrants were named as such because they left their homes and the places where they had grown up, relocating to lands where they had neither family nor property. Thus, anyone who leaves their homeland, whether a Bedouin or a city dweller, and settles in another land is considered a migrant (Ibn Manzur, 2005, p. 4087, 4088).

From a terminological perspective, scholars have defined migration differently depending on their field of expertise. In demography, migration refers to the individual or collective movement from one geographical area to another in search of better social, economic, or political conditions. If the person moves within the same country, it is called internal migration. If the movement crosses national borders into another country, it is referred to as external or international migration (Chichni, 2010, p. 10).

- **Illegal Immigration:** Generally, it is defined as the process of crossing land or sea borders into another country or residing there illegally after initially entering legally.

  Illegal immigration, as a phenomenon, has existed in both ancient and modern societies and has a global dimension, present in many countries worldwide. In Algeria, it is commonly understood as the journey toward the northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea without official documentation, often through "death boats," or using forged tourist visas with no intention of returning.

- **Harqa (Illegal Migration):** The term *harqa* extends beyond merely illegal immigration. It carries a sociological connotation, reflecting the determination and defiance of young *harraga* (illegal migrants), who seek to break all ties and "burn" every connection to their original society, where they found no place or opportunity. The term *harqa* comes from the word "burn," and it refers to the act of burning all identification documents, so the illegal migrant becomes stateless (Shabi, 2020, p. 161).

 2. **The Concept of Local Development:**

  A. **Definition of Development:**

Development is a dynamic process consisting of a series of structural and functional changes within a society. It occurs as a result of interventions aimed at directing the size and quality of resources available to the community, with the goal of improving the welfare of the majority of its members. This is achieved by increasing the effectiveness of individuals in maximizing the use of the community's resources to their fullest potential (Haroush, 2016, p. 253).

B. Definition of Local Development:

Local development is considered a directed social change, driven by a specific ideology. It is a long-term, complex process that is comprehensive and integrated across its economic, social, political, cultural, environmental, and technological dimensions. In this context, environmental regulations must not be ignored, and it is crucial to avoid the destruction of natural resources while also promoting the development of human resources. Local development involves creating transformations in the prevailing industrial base, with the ultimate goal being the improvement of conditions for individuals in the community.

Generally, local development refers to the enhancement of growth and change at the local, regional, or provincial level, distinct from the development produced by the central government (Ghribi, n.d., p. 2).

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) defines local development as "a process of social action that helps people organize themselves to carry out planning and implementation. They identify their collective and individual needs, recognize their problems, draw up plans to meet these needs and solve those problems, and implement these plans at the local level."

Samir Abdel Wahab defines it as "a process of change that takes place within the framework of a local public policy, reflecting the needs of the local unit through local leadership capable of utilizing local resources, convincing citizens to participate, and benefiting from both financial and moral governmental support. The ultimate goal is to raise the standard of living for local citizens and integrate all local units within the state" (Al-Jawhari, 2010, p. 140).

3. Objectives of Local Development:

The development process is a planned and programmed effort aimed at achieving a set of pre-determined objectives, including:

- Achieving regional balance and reducing disparities between different regions across the national territory by creating a dynamic of interaction and joint work among these regions to advance and achieve comprehensive development.

- Achieving social justice and ensuring the equitable distribution of wealth.

- Raising the standard of living of individuals by increasing their income, which enables them to obtain what makes their lives more prosperous and stable, reducing the desire for migration and rural exodus.

- One of the highest goals of local development is to build a solid infrastructure that accommodates investments and expands economic and social sectors. This increases local administrative revenues, allowing continued development work and regional planning. This goal, often referred to as "building the material foundation for progress," can help achieve the previously mentioned objectives.

- Bringing administration closer to the citizens to foster collaboration between the local population and elected officials in managing local affairs. It also aims to improve and strengthen cooperation between local administrations and central authorities.

- Satisfying the basic needs of individuals within the local community, such as healthcare, security, employment, education, etc. (Hijab, 2017, p. 359).

Second: Fundamental Reasons and Motives Behind the Rise of Illegal Immigration

There are various perspectives explaining the phenomenon of international migration. Despite these differences, scholars have generally divided the factors into two categories: push factors and pull factors, both of which play a prominent role as key drivers of international migration, whether legal or illegal:

1. **Push Factors (Expelling Factors):**

These are the factors that drive individuals to leave their home countries. They are related to the conditions in the countries from which migrants originate, encompassing political, economic, geographical, social, demographic, and psychological aspects, among others. These factors create pressures that "push" individuals out of their homeland. The main push factors can be explained as follows:

❖ **Political Factors:**

Political factors are among the most prominent causes of migration throughout history. It has become increasingly evident over time that international migration is significantly influenced by political conditions. One of the key political factors driving migration is the large-scale population exchanges between countries. Migration often occurs as a response to armed invasions, and many international organizations have been established to assist with such population movements, particularly those involving displaced people around the world. Notable organizations involved in this effort include the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Amnesty International.

Some of the coercive political reasons that lead to migration include the use of force, threats, and territorial seizure. External military interventions by other nations often result in large-scale migration, while domestic political pressures in certain developing countries also push individuals to migrate. In many such nations, democratic freedoms are scarce, and dictatorial regimes prevail. People are often imprisoned or detained without cause or trial. Furthermore, frequent internal revolutions, military coups, and civil wars force many to flee their countries.

Other significant political factors contributing to migration include international sanctions imposed on certain societies, which create harsh living conditions and prompt emigration. Additionally, many population movements are driven by the pursuit of religious and political freedom, as individuals seek refuge from persecution in their homelands.

While there are numerous cases where political and social motives outweigh economic ones in driving migration, such as religious and political persecution or various personal and family disturbances, the primary driver of modern forced migration is the need to escape persecution. In modern dictatorial regimes, people are often forced to migrate abroad or are restricted by the needs and purposes of dictators.

One of the most significant political causes of external migration is fleeing persecution, which has been a critical motivator for migration among religious and ethnic minorities, as well as intellectuals.

The persecution and subsequent migration of intellectuals, in particular, have had significant consequences (Al-Asfar, 2010, p. 87).

❖ **Economic Factors:**

Proponents of the economic interpretation view economic factors as the primary explanation for the phenomenon of migration. They argue that economic factors in the sending communities, such as unemployment, poverty, and the lack of job opportunities, are the main drivers of migration. Many thinkers have asserted that the economic factor is one of the most important push and pull factors for migration. One of the most significant influences on individuals or families that motivates them to migrate is the expectation of securing a better job, increasing income, and improving social prospects. This often involves moving from low-income areas to regions with higher income levels.

Moreover, data on economic incentives reveal that, in many cases, these incentives are decisive in causing migration. The disparity in living standards between the sending and receiving countries is often the driving factor behind migration flows. The desire for individuals to improve their economic standing—seeking better opportunities—has been a dominant force in modern international migration. It is rare to find groups or individuals who feel reasonably satisfied with their economic position in their home countries (Bashir, 2010, p. 132).

Extreme poverty is perhaps the most significant reason for migration. In some cases, famines or epidemics force people to leave their homeland. The economic factor plays a major role in human movements and population migration. Low living standards, severe poverty, and poor working conditions push individuals to migrate, whether internally or externally. Widespread unemployment and declining living standards do not provide for the essential needs of individuals and their families, leading them to seek livelihoods abroad to achieve their goals (Bashir, 2010, p. 133).

The spread of illegal migration has extended to nearly all countries of the world, particularly those in the southern hemisphere. Most of these countries suffer from poor economic and social conditions, with limited job opportunities. As a result, many young people in these countries experience frustration and despair due to the lack of employment opportunities that meet the basic needs of life. This drives them to seek opportunities in wealthier northern countries, even if it comes at great personal risk. It is not uncommon to hear reports of hundreds of people dying while attempting to cross seas to reach developed countries (Amin, 2010, p. 95).

❖ **Social Factors:**

According to sociologist Robert Merton, social problems often accompany industrial progress, and the sense of inequality grows among certain groups of the population when they compare their living conditions with those that could exist. This disparity exacerbates social issues, and the failure to address problems such as poverty, famine, unemployment, and disease increases individuals' awareness and sensitivity to these issues. When people feel that their basic needs are unmet, while they simultaneously observe the temptations and better living conditions in other countries, they become more inclined to improve their situation by pursuing the dream of migration. However, due to strict security measures and the refusal of receiving countries to allow legal entry, many resort to illegal immigration, risking their lives—often tragically resulting in death by drowning at sea.

In these circumstances, social groups, particularly the youth, find themselves in conflict with prevailing collective values, leading to divergent perspectives on various social issues. This discontent fosters a sense of alienation within their own societies. Therefore, illegal migration by young people reflects deep societal meanings, symbolizing a form of protest against and rejection of the current social conditions (Berkan, 2012, p. 53-54).

2. Pull Factors:

Just as push factors drive individuals and groups out of their original regions, pull factors in receiving areas attract many individuals and groups to migrate there. Push factors alone do not fully explain human migration; there must also be pull factors that encourage people to move. These pull factors can be either real or merely perceived. They are linked to the destination region and society and are characterized by the modern age's ability to facilitate movement and ease communication between different parts of the world, due to the significant advancements in communication and transportation.

Pull factors refer to all the favorable conditions that attract migrants in search of better job opportunities and a higher standard of living. Some of the most common pull factors, which often serve as primary causes of migration, include the following:

❖ **Cultural and Civilizational Advancement:** The availability of educational opportunities at all levels and in various fields acts as a major attraction for individuals and groups seeking to settle in more developed societies. Access to quality education is a significant pull factor for those who wish to enhance their knowledge and skills.

❖ **Availability of Job Opportunities in Industry, Commerce, and Services:** Countries with thriving economies, often due to abundant natural resources that support industrial growth, create a high demand for labor and specialized skills. In such nations, the demand for workers, especially young people, continues to increase. Migration typically starts with individuals and gradually expands to include families and relatives as more opportunities arise.

❖ **Natural Landscapes and Climate:** The moderate climate and attractive natural scenery in certain regions often draw people seeking a better quality of life. The pursuit of comfort, leisure, and other lifestyle benefits can motivate individuals to migrate for these reasons (Tala, 2021, p. 99).

Third: The Impact of Illegal Immigration on Development in the Region

While legal migration has clear effects on both sending and receiving countries, illegal immigration also significantly impacts the development base. Some of the key effects include:

⇒ **Brain Drain:**

The emigration of skilled professionals, who are a valuable resource shared between the country of origin and the host country, has a significant impact on development. In a world where the knowledge economy plays a pivotal role in driving development, the skills and technical expertise acquired in the host countries, as well as the potential for development in North Africa, represent important assets. These skills and future opportunities to create new, job-generating activities are advantages that deserve attention. In light of this, stopping this migration completely seems almost impossible, and finding alternatives or managing it becomes crucial.

⇒ **Economic Impact of Remittances:**

In the agricultural sector, the effects of migration vary. While the departure of young people can lead to the decline of agriculture in some areas, in other cases, remittances sent by migrants have a positive impact on rural communities. These financial transfers often contribute to the development of agricultural activities, as seen in the expansion of cultivated land and the modernization of production methods on independent family-owned farms.

One of the positive economic effects of remittances is their role in supporting liquidity in the economy and revitalizing the banking sector. For example, in Morocco, data shows that migrant savings exceeded 1 billion dirhams in 2003, representing 28% of total current deposits in the Moroccan banking system. This highlights the significant role that remittances play in bolstering the national economy and providing financial stability.

⇒ Illegal Immigration and Levels of Human Development:

Illegal immigration is closely tied to various levels of human development, particularly in North African countries. Annual reports from organizations like the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) suggest that human development aims to provide individuals with a decent life and expand their choices, turning wealth into services that benefit them. One key indicator of this type of development is the Human Poverty Index, which defines poverty as the deprivation of essential elements of human development, such as adequate healthcare, satisfactory educational levels, and an acceptable standard of living.

In the context of the growing phenomenon of illegal immigration, individuals often lose access to these basic needs—healthcare, education, and a decent standard of living. According to **the** Basic Needs Approach, the lack of these fundamental elements leads to a deprivation of vital necessities, negatively affecting the individual's overall well-being and quality of life. Thus, illegal immigration exacerbates the challenges of human development, particularly for those who are already vulnerable.

❖ Income Disparities at the Individual Level (Inequality in Global Income Distribution):

Income inequality is one of the primary causes of the decline in overall development and specifically human development. Income represents a key source of satisfaction with one's current situation, as it is one of the most important pillars of human development. The lack of equitable income distribution is a major contributor to poverty, directly contradicting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations, which aimed to reduce the global poverty rate by half.

Illegal immigration has numerous negative consequences on both economic and social development, particularly for individuals in North Africa. Migrants often end up living in underdeveloped and impoverished neighborhoods, enduring poor living conditions. Additionally, most illegal migrants come from low socio-economic and educational backgrounds, or from diverse cultural contexts, making it difficult for them to integrate into the host society. These difficult circumstances are especially prevalent as the wave of migration increases across the developing world, particularly in North Africa.

A 2006 report by the UN Secretary-General on **International Migration and Development** (September 14-15, 2006) noted that the total global migration count reached around 192 million, with approximately 1.25 million of those being undocumented migrants.

❖ Diverse Risks of Illegal Immigration:

The risks associated with illegal immigration are multifaceted, including economic, social, and political dangers. One of the most significant threats is to national security, particularly due to the connection between illegal immigration and organized crime. This situation destabilizes the countries of origin in North Africa, preventing them from maintaining the secure and enabling environment necessary for sustainable development. These serious outcomes of illegal immigration have forced North African countries to take action within regional organizations to seek long-term solutions to this phenomenon, utilizing various mechanisms aligned with a developmental approach (Ben Keita & Ben Jelani, n.d., p. 124, 126).

Fourth: Ways to Combat Illegal Immigration within Families

There are several methods that can help reduce the increase in illegal immigration among young people and prevent it at the same time. These include:

- Strengthening the Sense of Belonging to the Homeland: Instilling national pride in youth by organizing camps, school, and university programs that increase their attachment to their homeland. These initiatives should encourage them to contribute to the development of their country and discourage migration or distancing themselves from it.

- Encouraging Youth to Stay in Their Country: This can be achieved by valuing their academic qualifications and taking them seriously. Additionally, offering them incentives such as cars, housing, or health insurance can help divert their attention from other countries and instead attract them to stay and contribute to their own country.

- Introducing New Educational Specializations: These should enable young people to innovate and pursue scientific advancements in fields they are passionate about. Providing awards, honorary medals, scholarships, and study opportunities can enhance their confidence in themselves and in their homeland.

- Eliminating Financial and Administrative Corruption: This includes getting rid of favoritism and promoting equality among all members of society, ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity.

- Encouraging Youth to Start Their Own Projects: Offering financial and moral support, as well as providing them with necessary facilitation, can encourage young people to create their own businesses. Furthermore, promoting their participation in the political life of their country can also engage them more deeply in national development (Salhat, 2016, n.p.).

CONCLUSION:

After discussing the nature of illegal immigration, its causes, and some of its negative and positive impacts, as well as proposing possible solutions to this issue, we have summarized the key aspects of illegal immigration. The phenomenon is particularly tied to the challenge of development, highlighting the significant disparity between African countries and the European host countries. In light of this, several important points should be emphasized:

- In most cases, illegal immigration ends in failure, with many migrants being deported back to their home countries. In some instances, migrants may be imprisoned as punishment for violating immigration laws and traveling through illegal means.

- Illegal immigration methods often lead to the death of many migrants due to unsafe travel conditions, such as crossing the seas in small, unfit boats.

- Even if migrants manage to arrive safely and avoid detection by the authorities in the host country, they may still face significant hardship, such as being unable to find a job that meets their financial expectations. This may result in homelessness in a foreign land, without assistance or a way to return home.

- Illegal immigration is prohibited in all heavenly religions, as it is considered a form of theft. Thus, it should never be an option, no matter how dire the circumstances.

- Illegal immigration can also negatively impact developed countries by contributing to overpopulation and an influx of workers, which can strain resources and harm the economic stability of those countries.

Nowadays, many young people are filled with a strong desire for change and improvement, and they are eager to travel the world in search of better opportunities and more stable living conditions. They constantly aspire to live in countries with stronger economies that offer them better prospects. Consequently, many of these young people turn to migration as a solution.

Based on the discussion, several recommendations can be made as follows:

- The issue of illegal immigration cannot be addressed solely through security measures; it requires a comprehensive and integrated approach involving both formal and informal institutions.

- The state must ensure the provision of basic living conditions for its citizens, so they are not compelled to consider dangerous journeys like crossing in "death boats."

- Increasing developmental projects in both rural and urban areas to create jobs, making it easier for citizens to achieve a decent living.

- Efforts should be made to present the true reality of many migrants in other countries, highlighting the difficulties they face, including repeated violence and daily crimes.

- The state should focus on retaining talented individuals ("the brains") by providing them with the necessary resources for their work, development, and research in their fields.

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