

Determinants of Social Inclusion Among Youth in Algeria: Unemployment, Poverty, Migration, Delinquency, Drugs, And Suicide as Explanatory Variables

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the determinants of youth social integration in Algeria through a sociological approach that explains the relationship between several structural social phenomena such as unemployment, poverty, migration (including irregular migration), deviance, drug abuse, and suicide. The study is based on the assumption that these phenomena are not merely individual behaviors, but rather the outcome of structural dysfunctions within the social, economic, and cultural system, including unequal wealth distribution, weak social justice, rapid economic transformations, and the decline in the effectiveness of social control institutions.

The study further shows that the interaction of these factors leads to a decline in youth opportunities for professional and social integration, pushing some young people toward withdrawal or deviant behaviors such as illegal migration, drug use, or even suicide. The study concludes that addressing youth integration requires comprehensive policies that integrate economic, social, and cultural dimensions, while strengthening youth participation in public life and reinforcing social protection mechanisms.

Keywords: Social integration, youth, Algeria, unemployment, poverty, irregular migration, deviance, drugs, suicide, sociological analysis.

Introduction:

Talking about the reforms undertaken by the Algerian state, particularly those directed toward youth, has not prevented the emergence of a set of social phenomena. These phenomena, if anything, reflect on the one hand the failure of these policies, and on the other hand the need to carefully reconsider them so that they better correspond to the requirements of this age group. This is due to the difficulties young people have been experiencing as a result of these policies, which, in their view, have not gone beyond meeting only their basic life needs such as employment, housing, and the fair distribution of wealth, etc. This, in turn, makes them aspire to a better life.

Among the most important of these phenomena are unemployment, poverty, migration—especially irregular migration—delinquency, suicide, and drugs. These phenomena also reflect the state of non-integration of these young people within society. Our study comes as an attempt to diagnose the set of factors that have led to the emergence of social disintegration, which, according to Émile Durkheim, refers to “states of dysfunction in the system of the

division of labor and partial breakdowns in organic solidarity, and it also refers to the description of phenomena that appear inconsistent with the image of society” (F. Bourricaud, 2007). This will be done through a set of social manifestations and behaviors that justify this situation as follows:

1- Unemployment as a factor threatening the professional integration of youth:

First: Definition of unemployment.

The concept of unemployment is mainly associated with the ability, willingness, and search for work. It concerns the active population or the labor force, which will be discussed later in its definition. Definitions of unemployment vary from one organization to another and from one legislation to another, but they converge toward the same meaning. Therefore, the focus will be on the definition provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which defines the unemployed as: “every person who is able to work, willing to work, actively seeking work, and accepting it at the prevailing wage level, provided that he/she finds such work” (Zakane, 1992).

Second: Types of unemployment:

In order to discuss unemployment in Algeria, it is necessary to address the types of unemployment in order to identify the dominant form within Algerian society.

a/ Cyclical unemployment:

“It is unemployment resulting from economic fluctuations. It is an involuntary and compulsory type of unemployment” (Bouzidi, 1992).

b/ Frictional unemployment:

“It is the unemployment that occurs when a person leaves a job in order to search for a better one, due to the desire for a higher wage, a better job source, or the desire to move from one job to another within the country” (Others, 1998).

c/ Structural (technical) unemployment:

“It is defined as the disruption of the labor force due to changes in the economic structure, or more precisely, changes in the production structure such as shifts in demand for products, changes in production techniques, or the relocation of industries to other areas for settlement. This is a result of the current technological boom since the 1970s in particular” (Michel Devilliers, 2000).

d/ Open (visible) unemployment:

Open unemployment is one of the most widespread forms of unemployment because it represents a clear picture of involuntary unemployment. It refers to the existence of an excess number of people who are willing and able to work but cannot find jobs (Al-Tahawi, 2000). This is due to several reasons, including rapid population growth, lack of expansion in existing economic activities, and the replacement of labor by machines.

e/ Seasonal unemployment:

This refers to temporary unemployment that occurs due to seasonal factors in certain industries, such as the agricultural sector or other sectors (Al-Tahawi, 2000, p. 26). For example, in southern Algeria, which experiences an influx of foreign tourists in summer, workers are employed by tourism agencies and become unemployed during other seasons.

f/ Disguised unemployment:

It refers to a situation where the number of workers actually employed exceeds the real needs of the work, such that individuals work fewer hours than the official working hours (Al-Tahawi, 2000, p. 26).

g/ Voluntary and involuntary unemployment:

Voluntary unemployment refers to a situation in which a worker becomes unemployed by personal choice, such as resignation or refusal to work due to having another source of income. Involuntary unemployment occurs when workers are laid off.

From the above, we conclude that despite the efforts made by the Algerian state—which were discussed in the previous chapter—in combating this phenomenon and in the effective orientation of human resources through production channels and accumulation, which led to a “relative decrease in the unemployment rate to 10% in 2010” (Statistics, 2010), unemployment is still high, especially open unemployment, which affects various segments of society.

In particular, it affects youth, who represent two-thirds of society, including university students, graduates of institutes, and vocational training centers, due to several reasons, including (Statistics, 2012):

- State intervention in the normal functioning of the free market, especially regarding the minimum wage policy, whereas lowering wages and taxes would encourage investment and thus create wealth and job opportunities.
- The Algerian economy’s reliance on the hydrocarbon sector and the weakness of other sectors, which represent only 2% of the Algerian trade balance.
- Population growth (demographic increase).
- Continuous increase in the use of machines and rising productivity, which leads to reduced working hours and layoffs (technological revolution).
- Capitalists’ reluctance to invest when production does not yield sufficient profit to meet their expectations.
- The security crisis that affected the country, leading to a decline in both domestic and foreign investment, which is one of the key factors in reducing unemployment.

2- Poverty as an indicator limiting the social integration of youth in Algeria:

First: The sociological definition of poverty:

“Sociologists and researchers tend to adopt one of two approaches to the issue of poverty: through the concepts of ‘absolute poverty’ and ‘relative poverty’. Absolute poverty refers to the lack of basic resources needed to maintain health and normal bodily functions, whereas relative poverty involves assessing the gaps in living conditions between certain groups on one hand and those of the majority of society on the other” (Giddens, 2005).

The poor are defined as those who receive welfare assistance from society, representing the minimum income level. This income is what an individual receives when registered in social assistance lists. These definitions show that poverty is a very complex concept that cannot be defined by a single indicator alone. Therefore, any attempt to define it must take into account multiple criteria and indicators such as income, property, education, nutrition, social class or caste, and access to certain public services.

Second: Characteristics of poverty in Algeria

“The characteristics of poverty vary according to the region. The problem of poverty in rural Algeria is not a recent phenomenon, but it has worsened due to the increase in labor force. The

land ownership system (property system) remains the main cause of the existence and persistence of poverty. However, the issue is not limited to this. Access to public facilities and social services, as well as various institutions (administrative or financial), nutritional conditions, particularly food security issues, quality of life, housing conditions, and others, all contribute to further complicating the living conditions of rural populations in Algeria.”

A national study indicates that 70% of the poor live in rural areas and 61% are illiterate. If we rely on a definition of poverty based on criteria such as household consumption and access to social services like education, health, water, sanitation, housing, transport, electricity, and domestic gas, then rural populations are experiencing unprecedented levels of poverty.

In urban areas, however, economic and social inequalities affecting city dwellers are significant and are reproduced through patterns of exclusion and marginalization.

It is also observed that job insecurity, working conditions, and widespread unemployment contribute to the creation and reinforcement of poverty. The phenomena of informal housing (slums), begging, and the presence of homeless individuals without food or shelter reflect the depth and spread of impoverishment. Even middle and lower-middle social groups, which form the backbone of society, are not spared. Statistics show that 43% of wage earners are poor, and 12% of retirees also live in precarious conditions.

Thus, defining poverty requires considering additional diverse criteria such as access to drinking water, electricity, environment, housing quality, and household size. A study revealed that Algiers dropped from first place in 1987—when 91.67% of the population had access to water and 96.078% to electricity—to 15th place, with only 81.72% of housing units having access to water and 82.68% to electricity. Meanwhile, the city of Sidi Bel Abbès rose to the top, with 99.34% of its population having adequate housing, 93.89% access to electricity, and 91.6% access to drinking water, followed by Oran with slight improvement (0.083%) (Statistics).

Third: Diagnosis of poverty in Algeria (some statistics)

A/ According to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank reports:

Regarding poverty, Algeria has been classified among poor countries, despite financial improvements where foreign exchange reserves reached 80.1 billion USD in 2006 and were expected to exceed 105.7 billion USD in 2007. However, Algeria still faces the problem of unequal income distribution, in addition to widespread unemployment, illiteracy, low living standards, weak purchasing power, deprivation in rural areas, and poor health services.

The Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Algeria 103rd out of 173 countries in 2005.

B/ According to Algerian statistics:

There is significant inconsistency in poverty rates reported by government officials, the National Economic and Social Council, and the National Center for Studies and Analysis on Population and Development, as well as political and trade union circles. This reflects the absence of clear social measurement standards and the lack of serious studies on poverty, in addition to disagreement over the definition of poverty, all of which occur in the era of globalization.

A study conducted by the National Center for Studies and Analysis on Population and Development, commissioned by the Ministry of Employment and National Solidarity, showed

that poverty declined to less than 6%. It indicated that Algeria, previously classified as a poor country, now belongs to countries with a medium level of development.

The study covered a sample of 5,080 Algerian households across 43 provinces (north, south, east, west; coastal, mountainous, desert, steppe, and high plateaus) between 2004 and 2006. It found that the poverty rate was 5.7%, compared to 22% in 1995, decreasing to 17% in 1999 and 11.1% in 2005.

The study classified Tiaret as a severely affected province due to the sharp decline in living standards and deteriorating social and health conditions, with 36% of households classified as poor. The same rate was recorded in Tissemsilt and Adrar, while Relizane recorded 32%, and Oran, Tipaza, Médéa, and Tlemcen recorded 5%. El Tarf was considered the wealthiest province with only 4% poverty.

The study identified 46 poor municipalities nationwide, 61% of which are located in the high plateaus.

It concluded that people living below the general poverty line represent 5.5%, down from 32% in 2000 and 14.9% in 1995. Extreme poverty declined to 2.7% from 3.6% in 1998. It also confirmed a decrease in the proportion of people living on less than 1 USD per day to 0.6% (around 300,000–400,000 people), while average daily expenditure exceeded 2 USD per day. According to the National Center's findings, field studies by the Ministry of Religious Affairs identified nearly one million poor families across the country, including 199,292 families registered in the first quarter of 2006, and around 200,000 families compared to 606,611 needy families recorded during zakat collection campaigns from 2003 to 2005.

The National Office of Statistics reported that one-third of Algerian families are poor, 45% of wage earners live below the poverty line, 50% of farmers are heads of poor households, 60% of heads of households are illiterate, 10% are unemployed, and 30% earn less than 6,000 Algerian dinars per month (approximately 80 USD). Additionally, 1.6 million people migrated from rural to urban areas due to the economic crisis and deteriorating security conditions. A World Bank report published in April 2006 also confirmed that poverty in Algeria remains high relative to the country's economic potential.

Finally, it can be said that preparing an accurate poverty map would allow for a better understanding of poverty manifestations, such as the growth of slums, the reappearance of poverty-related diseases, the spread of begging, and the expansion of the informal sector. This raises the issue of understanding lived reality and its effects on the population, as well as difficulties in accessing basic services at the local level, in order to design appropriate measures to combat poverty and alleviate the suffering of the poor.

3- Migration as a phenomenon explaining the lack of integration of Algerian youth:

First: Definition of migration

Sociologists and specialists do not differ significantly in defining the concept of migration. "Frotschilld," in the Dictionary of Sociology, defines it as "the movement of individuals from one place to another, either voluntarily or forcibly, and one of its main characteristics is that it is intentional or planned and has a clear objective" (Brissa, 1990).

Second: Causes of migration

A- Economic causes (Chafik, 1998):

- Low wages and wage disparities within the same country push individuals to migrate, as wages abroad may reach up to ten times those earned in their country of origin.
- Unemployment and the lack of job opportunities lead individuals to leave their country.
- The aspiration for a better life, where living conditions appear easier and less complex in wealthy and developed countries, which provide better daily living facilities compared to countries of origin characterized by low service quality, low living standards, high prices, and low incomes, etc.
- Economic dependence on the colonial power: most developing countries have recently gained independence and were formerly colonies of developed countries that economically, politically, and culturally linked them to themselves, also attracting their skilled labor, as happened with Algerians.

B- Social causes:

“These are closely linked to the social failure experienced by many groups in their original society, in addition to the desire to reduce pressure on densely populated societies, especially the resulting shortage of services, difficulties in adapting to daily life, and the existence of conflicts and tensions. This pushes the individual to think about renewal and modernization by seeking a socially desirable status and environment” (Childe, 1956), which is only found in modern, materially attractive societies.

The idea of individuals migrating to destination societies is not limited only to improving social conditions; otherwise, we would not find migrants who were not necessarily disadvantaged or poor in their home societies.

Rather, there are other motives such as curiosity, the desire to escape spatial pressure and achieve psychological comfort, or to engage in activities not permitted in their original society, such as breaking traditional customs and norms. Some also migrate for leisure, known as “migration of leisure.” Sociologists in Britain consider that individuals who remain longer in the host society due to radical differences from their original society—such as Asians and Africans—are those who are compelled to move from their place of origin to a preferred destination that offers a healthier environment free from pollution, epidemics, etc.

“These motives are interrelated and cannot be separated from one another, as some researchers such as ‘Scheltz’ and ‘Gustad’ attempt to do by linking migration to the benefits derived from it, i.e., utility maximization” (Ahmed, 1987).

Third: Forms of migration

• Illegal migration:

Illegal migration, in its general meaning, refers to crossing land or sea borders and residing in another country in an unlawful manner. Migration may initially be legal and later become illegal, which is known as irregular residence.

The phenomenon of irregular migration has become a global issue, ranking third in terms of criminal seriousness after drug trafficking and arms trafficking. It has intensified in the post-Cold War period due to technological developments in communication and transportation, weak border control, ethnic conflicts, and forced displacement (Hijla). These new conditions have pushed people to seek better lives in foreign countries and have encouraged various forms of migration, along with the emergence of organized criminal networks known as illegal migration networks, including:

A/ Human smuggling:

Human smuggling refers to “the facilitation of the illegal entry of a person into a state of which he or she is not a national or permanent resident, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit” (Others, 2008).

Human smuggling activities expanded after World War II and developed significantly over the last two decades, which witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of people seeking job opportunities and attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea using unconventional means of transport, often at great risk. Human smuggling is carried out by organized international criminal groups composed of experienced individuals who previously worked in institutions related to migration, nationality, travel, tourism, and transport (land and sea).

According to a 2006 study by the Refugee Studies Center, migrants crossing the Mediterranean are victims of human trafficking, including women and children who are subjected to exploitation and abuse. The study also adds that irregular migration to European countries contributes to fueling xenophobic sentiments, and that some migrants face risks of persecution and human rights violations (Others, 2008, p. 42).

B/ Alienation

The concept of alienation (*Aliénation*) first appeared in writings referring to manifestations of mental disturbance. It was later used in sociology, philosophy, and social psychology. The original meaning of the term, derived from the Greek word *Persona*, refers to the transfer of ownership from one person to another under coercion (Kamal). This concept evolved within philosophy, with its early roots in Hegel, then Marx, and later existentialism in Sartre.

For Hegel, alienation refers either to separation or abandonment (Al-Mukhtar, 1999). Marx developed the concept by transferring it into materialist thought, giving it an empirical and sociological dimension after it had been a metaphysical and theological concept (Al-Nouri, 1979). According to Marx, alienation is the process through which humans become reified (objectified), where they are excluded through labor and become, by the force of their own work, commodities sold in markets. Reification means that humans fall under the control of things, leading to social relations between objects and material relations between individuals. As a result, people place their trust in things rather than in one another.

The concept of alienation refers to situations in which the unity of personality becomes fragmented due to the influence of cultural and social factors within society, causing the individual to lose a coherent sense of existence. According to this concept, personality alienation is determined by the following dimensions (Al-Nouri, 1979, p. 248):

- Psychological maladjustment experienced by the personality, such as lack of self-confidence, chronic anxiety, social violence, and pathological fears.
- The absence of an internal sense of psychological integration.
- Psychological complexes affecting the personality, such as the Oedipus complex, inferiority complex, and persecution complex.
- Weak sense of identity, including lack of belonging, lack of love, lack of self-confidence, lack of social status, and absence of a sense of security.

Supporting concepts:

A/ Extremism:

Definitions of extremism vary depending on the type of study that adopts the concept. In the *Robert Dictionary*, it is defined as exceeding the limits of moderation and exaggeration in belief

and behavior (Legrain, 1997). From a sociological perspective, extremism refers to going beyond moderation in discourse, attitude, or action, resulting in undesirable behavior (Ansart, 1997). Irregular migration, in its extreme form, represents a rejection of reality, and thus reflects behavioral extremism and attitudinal fanaticism, leading to withdrawal or escape from reality.

B/ Economic and social inequality:

It refers to the unequal distribution of wealth and valuable resources among different social classes and groups due to inefficient distributive policies that favor certain groups over others (Al-Fadel, 1980). The distribution process is of particular importance in comprehensive development, as it is a fundamental means of meeting societal needs, thereby reducing economic and social inequality and maintaining political stability.

C/ Deprivation:

Deprivation refers to the failure to satisfy needs that individuals consider essential, desirable, or expected. The deprived are those who feel the greatest dissatisfaction toward existing political, social, and economic systems (Sourial, 1977). Deprivation theory is an important framework for explaining irregular migration, as deprivation reflects frustration and psychological and social suffering. It represents a mismatch between societal goals and available means. Individuals who engage in irregular migration experience frustration within their cultural environment, and their life experiences negatively affect their roles and create many problems.

D/ Awareness of deprivation:

Awareness of deprivation refers to the recognition by deprived groups of their actual conditions and their ability to change them (Smouk, 2006). Here, the importance of irregular migration behavior becomes evident, as it pushes political systems to pay attention to marginalized groups, quickly diagnose their social problems, and work toward improving social conditions in order to ensure a dignified human life.

Fourth: A sociological reading of theoretical approaches explaining irregular migration

Irregular migration, according to its legal nature, is classified as a crime punishable by law. The legislator grants specialized institutions broad powers to combat this phenomenon through all legitimate means. From a sociological perspective, irregular migration is viewed as a social product resulting from various patterns of behavior, interactions, and social processes occurring within society (Al-Aziz, 2006). This concept has two main dimensions:

A/ The first dimension:

Changes in the rate of irregular migration are linked to the structure of society, including social transformations and systems. In this regard, sociologists examine the relationship between irregular migration rates and several social variables such as social mobility, cultural conflict, social stratification systems, economic and political factors, population density, and processes of wealth, income, and labor distribution, among others.

B/ The second dimension:

This dimension links irregular migration to the interactions that occur between individuals within the social structure. In reality, the explanation of irregular migration behavior falls within the main sociological theories: functionalism, Marxism, and symbolic interactionism. The study of irregular migration from a functionalist perspective is based on the idea that it is:

- A behavior that violates the established norms and behavioral patterns of society and constitutes a clear breach of social control rules, leading to the disruption of social relations and structures.
- A failure of different social systems to instill the norms and values upheld by society among its members (Al-Aziz, 2006, p. 25).
- A failure of individuals to internalize the values based on social solidarity and mutual support.

Therefore, functionalists emphasize the necessity of punishing such behavior while also applying treatment and reform approaches.

The American sociologist Édouard Lemert is considered one of the most prominent representatives of symbolic interactionism or social interaction theory. He argues that deviant behavior in general is the result of cultural conflict whose effects appear within social systems (Al-Aziz, 2006). Accordingly, irregular migration can be explained through three dimensions:

- Individual dimension
- Social dimension
- Situational dimension

C/ Dimensions of irregular migration:

From the previous sociological analysis of theoretical approaches explaining irregular migration, this phenomenon is linked to the following dimensions:

- Environmental pressures and their impact on social control norms and social ties.
- Imbalance between goals and available legitimate means to achieve these goals.

• Irregular migration as suicide:

Irregular migration can also be classified, according to Durkheim's theory, into three types of suicide:

▪ Egoistic suicide:

This behavior results from extreme individualism and the individual's detachment from the culture in which he lives. It arises due to weak social solidarity within society (Al-Douri, 1991), where the irregular migrant finds no support when facing problems, and irregular migration becomes a vital strategy he adopts for himself.

▪ Altruistic suicide:

This occurs when the individual is strongly integrated into groups or persons who are deeply convinced of the idea of irregular migration.

▪ Anomic suicide:

This occurs when social, cultural, and moral systems in society break down, when economic and political life becomes unstable, and when there is a cultural gap between goals, means, personal aspirations, and actual available opportunities (Al-Hakim, 1983).

As a result, this theory explains irregular migration as a phenomenon in which the migrant feels unable to access the legitimate means provided by society due to lack of job opportunities or inability to integrate into the social culture, leading him to withdraw. According to Merton, this represents a form of non-normative behavior (Al-Aziz, 2006, p. 47).

It also involves violation of shared values and norms. In this context, irregular migration is interpreted as deviant behavior, and society stigmatizes the irregular migrant (Al-Aziz, 2006, p. 53).

Media also plays an important role in stimulating this factor, as individuals may already have a tendency toward migration, and media representations encourage them to engage in this behavior.

Fashion trends also contribute by facilitating integration through the disappearance of some trends and the emergence of others, making it easier for individuals to integrate into other societies (Al-Aziz, 2006, p. 55).

• **Causes of irregular migration:**

Several studies have addressed the causes of migration. Everett Lee identified four factors that stimulate migration:

- Factors related to the migrant's place of origin
- Factors related to the destination area
- Intervening factors between the two areas
- Personal factors (Attoui, 1996)

Mangalem studied social change and its impact on people's values, needs, aspirations, and expectations. He analyzed social structure through three levels: the social system, the cultural system, and the personality system, and concluded that migration:

- Emerges as a key actor in maintaining the dynamic equilibrium of the social system as a whole.
- Acts as a compensatory mechanism for individuals facing problems in their original culture.
- Represents a counter-value to the effects of social change (Ghanem, 1982).

Other studies found that demographic changes influence migration as follows:

- High population growth rates in developing countries, combined with the absence of successful development programs, leading to high unemployment and poverty rates, etc.
- Industrialized countries are undergoing the final stages of demographic transition, experiencing a significant decline in population growth and becoming aging societies (Others, 2008, p. 7).

• **Colonialism as a factor in the fragmentation of the social structure:**

Defining the actions carried out by the colonizer against Algerian society acquires an important socio-historical specificity, as colonialism early initiated a process of restructuring social relations in accordance with the development of European capitalism and in service of its objectives (Smouk, 2006, p. 186). Its dimensions were manifested in the following:

- The emergence, during the occupation period, of different capitalist groups that formed the basic structure serving the interests of the colonizer.
- The violent destruction of the agricultural society, which forced the population to return to subsistence agriculture (Bernard, 1986), leading rural populations to migrate toward cities in search of work in marginal occupations (Jaghloul, 1982).
- The production of an individual detached from his tribe, as expressed by Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1964).
- The collapse of collective kinship and the rise of blood kinship ties (Berque, 1956).

• **Inequality in the distribution of national wealth:**

Algeria's economic independence led to the adoption of a comprehensive development policy aimed at eliminating unemployment, redistributing national income, and changing traditional

behavioral patterns. However, researchers indicate that the social disturbances experienced by Algerian society at different stages were due to:

- The neglect of local cultural values in the design and implementation of economic development policies.
- The absence of a comprehensive and coherent vision regarding cultural identity issues, and the belief that the economy alone could compensate for cultural deficiencies (Collin, 1992). The exclusion of Algerian individuals from participation in development policies and the absence of their role as an active driving force, which made the national economy resemble a “body without a soul,” as it was built on a Western model.
- The influx of oil revenues allowed for increased luxury consumption by certain social groups, while the broad base of Algerian society continued to suffer from unmet basic needs (Smouk, 2006, p. 209). As a result, individuals felt inequality in wealth distribution and continued to suffer from high prices, lack of housing, and the spread of slums. This led to the breakdown of family cohesion and social solidarity, as well as the weakening of social control institutions. Consequently, protests and social unrest increased, and violence became a dominant feature of Algerian society.
- The rapid increase in the number of educated youth alongside the inability of social institutions to absorb them, which prevented them from achieving their ambitions and led to feelings of social alienation due to misery, oppression, frustration, and collective resentment. This pushed them toward irregular migration, which they perceived as the best outlet for self-affirmation and identity realization.

• **The negative effects of globalization:**

Globalization has contributed to social disturbances through the worldwide expansion of market forces, which facilitated trade in various goods, including drugs, which have become one of the most widespread criminal activities today (Others, 2008, p. 49). It has also contributed to the emergence of social crises and new forms of criminal behavior.

Fifth: Statistics on migration in Algeria (irregular migration, 2007):

According to a report by the Arab League on Maghreb migration, the number of Algerians in Spain during the first four months of 2005 was estimated at 17,000, while France alone hosts about 90% of Algerian migrants abroad, including around 20,000 individuals residing illegally. The Algerian National Police Directorate recorded approximately 8,839 irregular migrants over the last five years.

A field study conducted by the Algerian National Gendarmerie indicated that between 2000 and 2006, the judicial system handled around 150 cases involving 899 irregular migrants.

The phenomenon of “el-harqa” (irregular migration by sea) or escaping toward death through risky sea journeys has increased, as migrants board so-called “death boats” in search of a better life on the other side of the Mediterranean. According to the National Gendarmerie, an average of 10 young people per day attempt this dangerous journey nationwide, under the slogan: “*Let the fish eat me, not the worms.*”

4- Delinquency and its impact on the social integration of Algerian youth:

First: The concept of delinquency

The term juvenile delinquency was first used in Britain in 1815. It is a general term used across all countries, although its definition, nature, manifestations, and degree of spread differ from one society to another depending on social and economic systems.

A/ Psychological concept:

Delinquency is behavior contrary to societal norms, based on maladjustment and psychological conflict between the individual and himself, provided that it becomes a stable psychological and social trait shaping the personality of the delinquent minor.

To define it more precisely, Hamza Mokhtar combined psychological and social dimensions, considering it “a social behavior based on psychological adjustment and conflict, which governs interaction in most daily life situations.” Therefore, the relationship between juvenile delinquency and its causes should not be ignored. Delinquents may be seen by legal experts and sociologists as a separate group, but in psychology, delinquency is only one form of maladjustment (Mokhtar, 1978).

B/ Social concept:

According to Sellos, a delinquent is an individual who displays aggressive behavior toward others and violates the customs, traditions, and values established by the group to which he belongs, whether individually or collectively, prompting society to respond with punishment or exclusion (Solosse, 1977).

Ali Shatta’s definition is among the most widely used, where delinquency is described as “behavior that deviates from the shared and legitimate expectations within the social system” (Al-Shatta, 1999).

Second: Assessment of delinquency in Algeria

Recent statistics indicate the recording of 190,000 various crimes, including 7,762 cases of crimes against persons, resulting in the arrest of 1,588 individuals. Crimes against property amounted to 14,711 cases, with 9,599 arrests.

The National Gendarmerie handled 2,573 cases in 2012, resulting in 3,986 arrests. It also arrested 1,870 individuals, including 354 women and 254 minors, in 9,249 cases related to irregular migration.

A total of 51,740 cases of crimes against property were recorded, with 18,752 arrests. Theft and property crimes ranked first with 41,560 cases and 13,485 suspects arrested, covering 29% of such cases. Meanwhile, crimes against persons reached 70,102 cases, with 48,049 arrests during the same period.

Regarding kidnapping crimes, statistics show that 46% of abduction cases involved children aged between 11 and 15 years. According to the National Gendarmerie, child kidnapping represented the largest proportion of abductions recorded in 2012. Neighbors accounted for 21% of kidnappers. A total of 231 kidnapping cases were recorded in the first half of the year, most of which involved girls.

5- Drugs and their role in undermining the social integration of Algerian youth

If reality now acknowledges that the problem of drugs—especially among youth—is one of the most widespread issues across the world, then it is necessary, through this section, to understand the nature of this phenomenon by reviewing its historical development, the motives leading to its occurrence, its main consequences, and the assessment of the phenomenon in

Algeria, based on statistics obtained from official bodies responsible for combating and treating this issue at the national level.

First: Motivations for youth drug use

A/ Social motivations:

• Social environment:

The social environment in which an individual lives is a fundamental factor in the increase or decrease of youth drug use. Residential areas of all types—elite, popular, and informal settlements (slums)—and their social conditions have a direct link to the spread of drug use among young people. This is reflected in differences in values, attitudes, economic status, and cultural and social conditions between residential communities.

It is also observed that the city of Algiers has not been spared from the spread of scattered slums in various areas, in addition to old popular neighborhoods. This urban composition of Algiers calls for attention to the informal settlements located particularly in its suburbs, which can be considered “poverty belts” that emerged around cities. These settlements are still in formation and are characterized by a lack of facilities, weak educational opportunities, limited job opportunities for youth, lack of training, and shortage of leisure spaces, etc.

Therefore, the condition of these neighborhoods in Algiers clearly contributes to influencing young people, increasing criminal behavior among them, and the spread of drug use. As our study focuses on youth and their social integration, such conditions significantly contribute to their social non-integration due to drug consumption.

• Low level of political participation:

There is no doubt that political participation among youth is important for developing their abilities, shaping their personalities, occupying their free time, and keeping them away from bad company, deviant behavior, and drug use.

Recently, there has been a significant withdrawal of youth from political life, reflected in their low participation in elections, which did not exceed 50% at the national level. Some reasons for this disengagement include the lack of internal democracy within political parties and weak popular support, in addition to weak political supervision and prevailing social traditions that downplay the importance of political participation. This is reflected in the large number of young people spending long hours in cafés in most areas without meaningful activity or work, which exposes many of them to deviance and drug use, explaining their lack of awareness and escape from reality.

Sociologists have also extensively discussed the impact of social factors on behavioral patterns, arguing that the drug problem in any society is a product of its culture and social structure. Functionalist theory focuses on tensions, disparities, and contradictions within the social system. Robert Merton and Michel McKee argue that drugs may be functional in some contexts, contributing to social organization within subcultures that have rituals and symbols that promote social cohesion among members through shared culture (Michel McKee, 1975). From this, it can be concluded that functionalist theory considers drug use as a result of social dysfunction and poor social organization. In terms of its focus on functions, it highlights some positive aspects, such as drug use contributing to the formation of cohesive subgroups that share drug consumption and leisure activities. However, it also emphasizes negative aspects, as certain socially accepted drugs (such as cannabis) may be considered functional, while mood-altering drugs such as heroin and cocaine are seen as dysfunctional because they threaten

the social system. These drugs are often used by groups that reject dominant social values, creating moral panic and threatening social stability (Mary, 1986). Youth drug use is also seen as an indicator of loss of hope in building a stable life.

Regarding conflict theory, Kris and Kleiman assumed that drug users are escapees or withdrawn individuals, and that this results from social problems related to exploitation and social injustice. They also argue that any attempt to suppress drug use creates secondary problems such as organized crime and meaningless conflict with the legal system (James William Colman, 1984).

From the above, it becomes clear that the functionalist view explains drug abuse as resulting from social disintegration and rapid sudden changes that weaken social norms and reduce the ability of institutions to maintain social control. Conflict theorists, on the other hand, see poverty, exploitation, oppression, and injustice as causes that push individuals into drug use, which is viewed as an escape from reality and a loss of hope in favor of seeking a better society that may fulfill their aspirations.

In any case, sociologists have identified additional factors that represent the main social causes of drug use, including family conditions, peer groups, role models, and drug availability—all of which are influential in the emergence of this phenomenon.

6- Suicide as a phenomenon explaining the lack of youth integration in Algeria

The phenomenon of suicide in Algerian society has witnessed a remarkable and unprecedented increase, similar to some other countries, a situation that was not the case in the past.

There is no doubt that the emergence of this phenomenon in our society—despite it being a conservative society with noble customs and traditions that do not allow such behaviors among its members—must be understood in light of the social, economic, political, and cultural transformations that Algerian society has undergone in all fields. We will address some of the reasons that push some Algerian youth toward suicide.

First: Causes of suicide among youth in Algeria (Mimouni, 2008)

A/ Social and family problems

No family is free from problems, regardless of their nature. It has been shown that more than half of suicide attempts are due to family problems. Among them, 19.33% of suicides are due to continuous conflicts with the father (permanent misunderstanding with the father), 14% due to constant quarrels with the mother, and 2.66% due to ongoing conflicts with other family members. It is also noted that 0.66% of suicides involve individuals aged between 10 and 14 years, which is a very small percentage, increasing with age up to 20%.

Housing overcrowding and lack of recreational facilities also create an unbearable family environment and generate a desire for escape. This shows that the family in Algerian society suffers from instability in the relationships that organize its members.

B/ Marital conflicts

These are part of social problems as they lead to strained relations between spouses. Statistics show that 6.66% of women committed suicide due to marital conflicts compared to 0.66% of men for the same reason. These cases appear at the age of 25 (2%), then rise to 3.33% in the 30–34 age group, and disappear after the age of fifty.

C/ Emotional problems

Exposure to severe emotional crises may sometimes lead individuals to lose balance, increase emotional tension, and affect their behavior toward others, especially at work and within the family. They become more irritable and tense and may develop suicidal thoughts. In this regard, 17.27% of individuals attempted suicide due to emotional problems, including 15.45% females, mostly aged between 15 and 34 years, with the highest rate (5.33%) in the 15–19 age group.

D/ Sexual problems

Sexual behavior in Algerian society, as in many Arab-Islamic societies, is religiously and legally prohibited except within marriage. The study shows that 4% of girls attempted suicide due to loss of virginity, and 1.33% due to illegitimate pregnancy, mostly between 20 and 34 years of age, with the highest rate (3.33%) in the 20–24 age group.

E/ Educational problems

School is an extension of the family's role in preparing youth for productive functions in society. It also helps them develop physically, psychologically, and socially, and assists them in facing problems through active and positive intervention.

However, at times, the school or educational institution may become a source of tension and crisis, reflecting a failure to adapt to the educational system, leading to academic failure, exam failure, and school dropout. This creates psychological instability regarding their uncertain future.

Statistics show that 4.66% of individuals attempted suicide due to these educational problems, aged between 10 and 24 years, with no cases recorded after the age of 25.

F/ Economic and professional problems

Economic problems:

Unemployment and housing problems in Algeria are among the most important social issues, resulting from demographic imbalance. Poor housing is a factor influencing deviance. It was found that 2% attempted suicide due to housing problems, and another 2% due to unemployment, affecting only the 20–39 age group.

Professional problems:

These refer to difficulties encountered during work, especially among men, including poor adaptation to the work environment or inability to integrate socially within institutions. Work itself may become a source of stress and psychological pressure. The study shows that 2% of the sample attempted suicide due to professional problems and lack of integration.

G/ Nervous, psychological, and medical problems

Severe anxiety and nervous disorders:

Severe anxiety or nervous breakdown often leads to suicide in some individuals. Psychological and nervous disorders have increased in modern societies in recent years, along with suicidal behaviors. Data show that 10.90% of the sample attempted suicide, including 6.33% due to severe anxiety and 4.54% due to nervous breakdown, mostly in the 10–34 age group.

Illness:

This refers to chronic physical illnesses from which individuals lose hope of recovery, leading to deep sadness and psychological distress that may push them toward suicide.

Despite the diversity of suicide causes, the main cause remains family problems, which appear in the form of continuous conflicts between family members, lack of harmony, and weak communication.

Regarding methods, some individuals use violent means while others use non-violent ones. The most common methods include hanging, burning, jumping from high places, firearms, ingestion of toxic and chemical substances (such as medicines and cleaning products), use of sharp objects, and inhalation of toxic gases.

From the above, it is clear that the phenomenon of suicide is continuously increasing in light of worsening economic crises and housing shortages due to population growth, affecting all segments of society, especially unmarried youth and those preparing for marriage.

According to statistical data, this phenomenon—rejected by society for several reasons—has, due to successive shocks affecting Algerian society since the beginning of the last decade, turned into a real crisis requiring urgent intervention to save lives and encourage individuals to confront reality rather than resorting to destructive quick-fix solutions.

Second: Assessment of the phenomenon of suicide in Algeria (National, 2011)

No one can deny that the phenomenon of suicide in Algeria has spread across various segments of society to the extent that it has even affected children. Its prevalence varies from one region to another, and it is distributed across different provinces of the country. This is clearly reflected in daily news published by newspapers about suicide cases, as well as in statistical figures related to the phenomenon.

The causes sometimes appear trivial, while at other times they reflect complete despair of life due to social, economic, and even political factors. What can be observed regarding the development of suicide methods in recent years is the spread of self-immolation, known as the “Bouazizi phenomenon,” which some consider the result of new contextual conditions. What is puzzling is the inability of religious belief to deter individuals from ending their lives in this manner, despite repeated affirmations by religious scholars and imams that suicide is a prohibited act, considered as taking one’s own life.

However, if we say that this phenomenon is not limited to Algeria but affects all countries of the world, it is more widespread in developed countries than in developing ones. Interestingly, suicide is classified among the top ten causes of death globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that approximately one million people die by suicide every year, which led it to designate September 10 as World Suicide Prevention Day each year (one million deaths by suicide annually).

The purpose of this day, according to WHO, is to strengthen commitment and action worldwide to prevent suicide cases. On average, about 3,000 suicides are recorded daily, with 20 or more attempts for every completed suicide. According to WHO, each year one million people die by suicide, at a rate of 16 per 100,000 population—equivalent to one suicide every 40 seconds. Suicide is also the third leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 44 in some countries. The WHO and its partner organizations, in cooperation with the International Association for Suicide Prevention, which sponsors this event, seek to promote appropriate treatment for those who attempt suicide and to follow up on their cases, as well as to encourage media outlets to exercise greater responsibility and rationality when reporting suicide cases, according to the organization’s statement.

The WHO also emphasizes the need for international efforts to raise awareness that suicide is one of the leading preventable causes of premature death. It calls on governments to establish policy frameworks for national suicide prevention strategies. At the local level, political

declarations and research findings must be translated into preventive programs and activities within communities.

The phenomenon of self-immolation spread widely following the incident of a Tunisian young man who set himself on fire in protest against his living conditions, which triggered the so-called “Jasmine Revolution” in Tunisia, eventually leading to the fall of the former president. Professor Ammar Talbi considers that the worsening of suicide in Algeria is due to “injustice and harsh living conditions imposed on youth, as they represent the group most prone to suicide.” He attributes responsibility for the spread of the phenomenon to all actors, starting from the family and school to the media. He also stresses the need to broaden perspectives in schools, avoid punitive and pressure-based educational methods, and promote religious upbringing that encourages youth to face difficulties rather than harm themselves, as well as to promote good interpersonal relations. Media institutions should also be careful in selecting the content they present, especially films.

He further emphasizes that political decisions to combat the phenomenon are necessary, as specialists believe such measures are the way to create an environment capable of caring for individuals at risk of suicide. This was also highlighted by the World Health Organization, which called on governments to establish policy frameworks for national suicide prevention strategies.

Statistics in Algeria during the first half of 2012 show that 247 suicide attempts by self-immolation were recorded, including 164 unsuccessful attempts.

Conclusion

Interpreting social phenomena today, in the context of the disappearance of clear interpretive boundaries within the nation-state, places sociological researchers in Algerian universities under pressure to broaden analytical perspectives within society and state policies. Despite the efforts of the Algerian state to address and eliminate social problems affecting youth, the political approach toward dynamic policy-making and the creation of mechanisms that form an overall societal project covering all educational, professional, and other sectors remains insufficiently responsive to youth aspirations.

The “aging of youth,” as a social paradox experienced in Algeria, results from the gap between state projects and youth expectations. This gap contributes to the formation of a sociological imagination shaped by exposure to the outside world, globalization, and social media, leading young people to develop behaviors that hinder their social integration.

This situation requires the state to restructure its political projects and ensure the participation of youth in decision-making processes that concern them.

In light of the critical situation of youth in Algeria, there is a need for a social project that responds to their aspirations, as current social conditions and behavioral patterns produced by multiple social phenomena may lead society toward further social disintegration, instability, and a loss of shared norms that ensure social cohesion, security, and unity.

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