

Mechanisms for Leveraging the Cultural and Social Roles of Education to Reduce Illegal Migration

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Abstract

The material dimension of human existence is reflected in the fundamental needs essential for sustaining life, which motivate individuals to pursue movement and productive activity. Need is a law of nature, while its satisfaction constitutes the mechanism of survival. This explains the differences among individuals, whose needs and aspirations are diverse rather than uniform. Therefore, people strive to assert themselves and fulfill self-realization by contributing positively to the dynamics of society and its economic development. Such aspirations often lead to mobility, relocation, and migration, whether within the same country or across national borders, particularly in the pursuit of greater prosperity and well-being. Nevertheless, mounting material and psychological pressures have driven some individuals to circumvent legal frameworks through illegal migration. This phenomenon has become particularly alarming in migration flows from the countries of the Global South, especially those bordering the Mediterranean, toward the countries of the Global North, notably Europe. In response, many Southern countries have sought to curb illegal migration by launching economic reforms aimed at promoting development and economic growth. However, these efforts have largely proved ineffective because they were not founded on a sound educational framework that respects both the needs of individuals and the values and philosophy of society.

Keywords: Illegal Migration, Education, Cultural Roles, Social Roles, Economic Development

Introduction

Developing countries, including the Arab states, face an intense wave of external pressures led by the West that has affected all dimensions of their societies, political, economic, social, and, above all, cultural. These pressures have contributed to persistent underdevelopment, dependency, stagnation, and institutional weakness. As a result, poverty has become widespread, public debt has increased, ignorance has deepened, and superstition, myths, and false beliefs have proliferated. This environment has fostered extremism, alienation, rejection of reality, despair, and numerous other negative social phenomena. The condition of underdevelopment, dependency, and the legacy of colonialism has generated new and complex social problems, encompassing suicide, child labor, and migration, whether in the form of brain drain or illegal migration. Addressing these challenges requires treating the root causes rather than merely the symptoms. As one scholar aptly observes, "Those who seek a *pill* against ignorance, a *tablet* against colonialism, or a *medicine* to cure poverty will never fulfill civilization"¹. As a result, growing calls have emphasized the need to confront reality

¹ Malek Bennabi. The Conditions of the Renaissance. Translated by Abdel Sabour Chahine. Damascus, Syria: Dar Al-Fikr for Printing, Distribution and Publishing, 1986. No edition, p. 42.

and address its complex and interconnected challenges. In response, developing countries, in cooperation with international organizations and even developed nations, have established committees, convened conferences, published reports, provided financial assistance, and recruited experts and specialists across multiple fields, particularly economics, to implement reforms, enhance development, and draw lessons from successful international experiences.

However, a closer examination of the causes of underdevelopment and the growing prevalence of negative social phenomena, particularly migration in general and illegal migration in particular, demonstrates considerable differences in both the underlying causes and the consequences of this phenomenon, as well as in the seriousness, approaches, and capacities devoted to addressing it. An effective solution must begin by identifying the roots of illegal migration and relating them to prevailing living conditions and to the broader social, political, economic, and cultural contexts in which they arise. Since civilizational advancement and sustainable development depend on a purposeful educational project, and because younger generations constitute the cornerstone of the future, it has rightly been argued that: "Education in the Arab countries, as in any other country, requires continuous development, modernization, and sustained efforts to align with the rapid expansion of knowledge in today's world."²

The fundamental challenge facing developing countries lies in the deficiency of knowledge and the absence of a coherent philosophical vision for development and society. Numerous development initiatives and strategic plans have been adopted as ready-made, imported models rather than being based on an objective understanding of local realities. As a result, the Western model has often been considered the key to solving the practical problems of developing countries, including the Arab states, and as the pathway to catching up with the developed world.

Accordingly, formulating strategies, convening conferences and seminars, and designing development plans to curb the migration of individuals from their homelands, even at the risk of their lives, cannot be effective without first developing a thorough understanding and conducting a rigorous analysis of the phenomenon. As one scholar observes, this negative phenomenon "represents an intellectual, scientific, and human hemorrhage whose value can scarcely be measured; it constitutes a genuine wealth, or an inevitable tribute, paid to the industrialized and developed countries."³ The considerable financial resources invested by Arab countries in educating and training qualified professionals, with the expectation that they would contribute to national development and modernization, are ultimately lost. Rather than contributing to the progress of their own societies, these highly skilled individuals become contributors to the development of countries that benefit from their expertise. This represents a significant loss for the Arab world, as it primarily affects its intellectual elite and university-trained professionals. The continuous rise in this trend undermines the capacity of Arab countries to build their own scientific, technological, and developmental capabilities. In reality, this phenomenon is not without justification. The low level of individual income compared with that in developed countries compels many people to seek alternative means of enhancing their living conditions. Furthermore, the environment in developing countries, encompassing the Arab world, often fails to provide the conditions necessary for a dignified life,

² Abdullah Abdel Daem. *Education and Enlightenment in the Development of Arab Society*. Beirut, Lebanon: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2nd ed., 2008, p. 17.

³ Aissa Ali and Nazih Al-Jundi. *Education in the Arab World for Students of the Educational Qualification Diploma*. Damascus: Damascus University Publications, no edition, 1998, p. 243.

scientific research, or innovation. Scientific and cultural underdevelopment, the lack of advanced research institutions, such as strategic research centers, and restrictions on intellectual freedom further aggravate the problem. As a result, there is an urgent need to examine reality in all its contradictions and complexities through careful study, critical analysis, and objective assessment grounded in science, knowledge, empirical methodologies, and field research. Such an approach is essential for understanding the true nature of illegal migration, its cultural and value-related dimensions, and its relationship to the educational realities of developing countries and the Arab world. In reality, the individual who views illegal migration as a magical solution to personal problems and hardships is acting under the influence of illusion rather than informed judgment. This highlights the urgent need to foster educational action and activate the multiple educational institutions, particularly schools, to help curb this phenomenon. Therefore, this research seeks to examine the effectiveness of educational investment and the cultural and social roles of education in strengthening intellectual maturity, enhancing national and territorial belonging, and promoting self-esteem as means of reducing illegal migration. It does so by addressing the following research problem:

If illegal migration constitutes a genuine challenge to the growth, development, and prosperity of states, then to what extent can investment in education and the activation of its cultural and social roles be considered an effective means of reducing illegal migration?

First: Illegal Migration: Concept and Causes

Before discussing the concept of illegal migration, it is necessary to begin by examining illiteracy in developing countries and its relationship to illegal migration. Illiteracy is a widespread negative social phenomenon affecting most countries around the world, particularly developing ones.⁴ Traditionally, illiteracy refers to the inability to read and write. As a result, many negative conditions, encompassing ignorance, limited intellectual development, weak moral awareness, the absence of refined behaviour, and inadequate social interaction, have often been attributed to illiteracy, which is considered one of the root causes of many social problems. However, in the modern era the concept of illiteracy has acquired broader dimensions associated with education and civilization. It remains a major challenge in the Arab world, where it affects a significant proportion of the population, although its prevalence varies from one country to another. Illiteracy is particularly widespread in rural areas and among women. In a published statement, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) reported that the *2011 Arab Development Challenges Report* demonstrated that the literacy rate in the Arab countries had reached 72.9%, meaning that the illiteracy rate stood at 27.1%.⁵ The organization further stated that 60% of illiterate people in the Arab world are women. Citing the *2011 Global Monitoring Report on Education for All*, it also noted that 6.188 million school-age boys and girls in the Arab countries were not enrolled in school. According to the report, this figure represents a continuous source of future illiteracy. Furthermore, school dropout rates during the primary phase range from 7% to 20% in most Arab countries, reaching 30% in some cases. The causes of this phenomenon can be traced to the legacy of foreign colonialism, which deprived large segments of the population of access to education, as well as rapid population growth and school dropout resulting from economic hardship, encompassing low individual income and poor living standards. Consequently, most Arab countries have adopted multiple strategies to fight illiteracy, primarily

⁴ Aissa Ali and Nazih Al-Jundi. Education in the Arab World for Students of the Educational Qualification Diploma. Ibid., p. 23.

⁵ Al Jazeera Net. "Illiteracy Rate in the Arab World Reaches 27 Percent." Published January 7, 2024, 21:30. (In Arabic).

through economic and social development. However, "the efforts undertaken remain far too modest when compared with the magnitude of the problem, and Arab countries have not accorded literacy eradication the priority it deserves."⁶ Nevertheless, what is most important is the existence of a genuine commitment to change, since meaningful progress cannot be fulfilled within a short period. Illiteracy remains a serious threat, and its eradication is a collective responsibility. Literacy education is, in itself, both an educational process and a civilizational endeavour, as it restores the dignity and humanity of the Arab individuals, strengthens their attachment to their homeland, prevents alienation and estrangement from their country, and reduces their susceptibility to the risks of illegal migration. The term migration (*Hijrah*) is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. In Surah An-Nisā' (97), Allah, the Exalted, says: **"Indeed, those whose souls the angels take while they have wronged themselves, the angels will ask, 'In what condition were you?' They will reply, 'We were oppressed in the land.' The angels will say, 'Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?' Such people will find their abode in Hell, an evil destination indeed."**

Likewise, in Surah An-Nisā' (100), Allah says:

"Whoever emigrates for the sake of Allah will find on the earth many places of refuge and abundant provision. And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger and then death overtakes him, his reward has already been assured by Allah. And Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

The concept of migration is also emphasized in the Prophetic Sunnah. It is narrated on the authority of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) say:

"Actions are judged only by intentions, and every person will have only what he intended. Thus, whoever's migration was for Allah and His Messenger, his migration was for Allah and His Messenger; and whoever's migration was for worldly gain or to marry a woman, his migration was for that for which he migrated." (Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.)

According to *Lisan al-Arab* by Ibn Manẓūr, *hijrah* (migration) derives from the verb *hajara*, which means "to abandon" or "to forsake" and is the opposite of *waṣl* (connection or union). It is said: *hajarahu yahjuruha hajran wa hijranan*, meaning "he cut off or severed relations with him." Likewise, *yahtajiran* and *yatahajaran* refer to two people who mutually shun or abandon one another. The noun is *hijrah* (migration). In the Prophetic hadith, it is stated: "There is no *hijrah* after three (days)."⁷

It is the verbal noun of the root h-j-r (*hajara – yahjuru – hijranan*). It is said, *hajara al-qawmu min darin ila dar*, meaning that the people migrated from one abode to another, leaving the first behind. Thus, *hijrah* denotes moving from one land to another, while *hajara al-shay'* means "to abandon" or "to leave something."⁸

In terminology, migration refers to the movement of individuals and groups from their country of origin to a new place of residence that they choose for various reasons, often influenced by the conditions prevailing in the receiving countries and by factors that serve the economic interests of both the host and the countries of origin. It also denotes leaving one's homeland for another, that is,

⁶ Mohamed Mounir Morsi. The Reference in Comparative Education. Cairo: Alam Al-Kutub, 2013, p. 218.

⁷ Ibn Manẓūr. *Lisan al-Arab*. Cairo, Egypt: Dar Al-Maaref, no edition, no publication date, p. 4616.

⁸ Sayech Abdelmalek. Euro-Maghreb Cooperation in Combating Irregular Migration. Unpublished Master's Thesis in Law, Badji Mokhtar University, Annaba, Algeria, Academic Year 2006–2007, p. 12.

the movement of people from one place of residence to another. In the social sciences, migration is understood as the spatial and geographical movement of individuals and groups.

Throughout history, human beings have continuously experienced migration, travel, and mobility in search of livelihoods, grazing lands, settlement opportunities, the development of civilizations, or escape from barren and inhospitable regions to places more conducive to life, development, and cultural advancement.

Therefore, migration is an inherent and natural human phenomenon. Traditionally, migration was understood as legal migration, whereby individuals moved from one country to another in accordance with the laws and regulations established by the receiving state. It is also defined as traveling from one's country of origin to another through lawful and internationally recognized procedures. However, over time, the growing complexity of life, the emergence of the modern state, the rise of nations and national identities, the consolidation of the nation-state grounded in the principle of sovereignty, and evolving concepts of employment and standards of living have significantly transformed migration patterns. Psychological and intellectual changes, rising levels of awareness, the information revolution, successive industrial revolutions, the widespread use of the Internet, and the dominance of visual media through television and smartphones have further accelerated these transformations. These developments have enhanced unrealistic aspirations and the idealization of a "terrestrial paradise" portrayed by the media, particularly among young people, thus contributing to the rise of illegal migration. The United Nations defines illegal migration as the unauthorized entry of an individual into another country by land, sea, or air without any form of permanent or temporary residence permit⁹. It also refers to non-compliance with the legal requirements governing the crossing of international borders. More broadly, it includes the clandestine crossing of land or maritime borders and residence in another country through unlawful means.¹⁰

Based on the principle that every consequence has underlying causes, it can be argued that illegal migration is driven by numerous interrelated and complex factors that have contributed to its increasing prevalence. Although a comprehensive analysis of these factors is beyond the scope of this discussion, it is sufficient to highlight the most significant causes, including:

Economic Factor

Numerous underdeveloped and developing countries, including many Arab states, face a wide range of economic challenges. These involve weak productive capacity, trade deficits, mounting public debt, and rising import bills, particularly for food and other essential commodities. To address these challenges, many governments have adopted economic and investment programs aimed at enhancing productivity, creating a more favorable investment climate, and attracting foreign investment. In response to major global economic transformations and under the influence of international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), several developing countries have sought to realign their economies by implementing comprehensive economic reform policies. Accordingly, these countries have embraced economic reform by restructuring elements of their economic systems in the desired direction. Economic reform refers to the measures adopted by the state to reduce or eliminate structural distortions within the

⁹ Massaoudi Youcef. "The Legal Mechanisms for Combating the Employment of Irregular Migrants in Light of the Provisions of Law No. 08-11." *Journal of Law and Human Sciences*, p. 25.

¹⁰ Sasi Sofiane. "Youth Attitudes toward Irregular Migration and Their Impact on Psychological and Social Adjustment: A Field Study of Youth in the City of El Tarf." *Journal of Legal and Social Sciences*, University of Djelfa, p. 32.

economy with the objective of fulfilling sustained economic growth. It may also be defined as a set of policies and measures designed to promote macroeconomic stability.¹¹

Accordingly, economic reform is a continuous and dynamic process aimed at responding to global changes and addressing social challenges. It seeks to establish a balanced relationship between the public and private sectors through carefully designed policies. The success of economic reform depends largely on the effectiveness of the political system, the efficiency of the administrative apparatus, and the responsiveness and cooperation of civil society institutions. However, these reforms remain significantly influenced by international financial institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, especially in matters associated with debt management and debt rescheduling, which are often accompanied by conditions, external pressures, and structural reform requirements.

Political Factor

A closer examination of the relationship between political systems and illegal migration demonstrates a strong and inseparable connection. The success of any nation's development project depends fundamentally on the nature and effectiveness of its political system. A comparison between Western political system, which generally uphold human dignity, individual freedom, and democratic values, and many political systems in the developing world, which have historically been marked by authoritarianism, repression, patronage, and coercion, illustrates this contrast. The political conditions prevailing in many developing and Arab countries are often attributed to historical legacies, particularly the political order established following the Sykes–Picot Agreement. This order reinforced the authority of tribal leaders and ruling families whose primary concern was preserving their familial and tribal privileges. According to this perspective, Western powers encouraged and consolidated such political structures to facilitate fragmentation, maintain dominance, and weaken Arab societies. Consequently, the social environment shifted from one intended to cultivate citizenship, freedom, and democratic values to one marked by authoritarianism and political repression, offering limited opportunities for the development of human potential and professional competence. There is also a close relationship between authoritarian political systems and administrative corruption. Prevailing political practices often have a detrimental impact on the educational environment and the quality of education by enhancing a culture of unquestioning obedience to figures of authority, whether teachers, administrators, or political leaders. As a result, social life becomes increasingly shaped by the dominant political ideology, leaving little room for freedom of expression, respect for diverse opinions, or intellectual pluralism. Even creativity is tolerated only when it serves the interests and orientations of the central authority. Such conditions encourage many individuals to seek escape from what they perceive as oppressive political and social realities. They often regard themselves as victims of political decisions and state policies over which they have no control and for which they bear no responsibility. Consequently, many people in the Arab world draw comparisons between the Global North and the Global South, perceiving them as the difference between prosperity and hardship. Under such circumstances, migration, whether through regular or irregular channels, is viewed as the only viable means of reaching the "promised land" and securing a better future.

Educational and Cultural Factor

¹¹ Gouda Abdel Khaleq. *Economic Reform: An Alternative Vision*. Cairo, Egypt: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2005, p. 33.

The history of civilization bears witness to the remarkable intellectual and scientific contributions of Muslim scholars to human knowledge and creativity. At one time, the major cities of both the eastern and western Arab world served as leading centers of learning, attracting students from across the globe. Nevertheless, historical transformations and the rapid succession of political events accelerated the decline of the Arab world's role in shaping global developments. Although a detailed discussion of the creative fulfillments of Arab Muslims lies beyond the scope of this study, recalling this historical legacy serves as a reminder to those who portray the Arab intellect as inherently stagnant or resistant to innovation.

Many of the educational challenges facing contemporary Arab societies can be traced to the distortion of culture and the erosion of Arab identity and authentic values, which, according to this perspective, have resulted from external influences, particularly those of Western powers. If the Ottoman period, lasting nearly four centuries, was characterized by limited attention to educational development and the advancement of knowledge, with greater emphasis placed on policies of Turkification and military campaigns, then the modern colonial era inflicted even greater devastation upon educational and cultural institutions. This process ultimately culminated in the appearance of a unipolar international order, the rise of globalization, and the consolidation of American hegemony.

These three historical stages, the Ottoman period, modern colonialism, and American hegemony, differed in their driving forces but shared a common outcome: "their profound impact on the Arab individual. Collectively, they fostered a culture of alienation within Arab societies. Burdened by the legacies of the past and the challenges of the present, Arab societies have struggled to develop a free and progressive cultural identity capable of satisfying both individual aspirations and societal needs. This situation has been further exacerbated by cultural dualism among the educated and political elites, giving rise to ideological and cultural conflicts within the same society"¹². Consequently, some Arab intellectuals, influenced by Western civilization, promoted Western cultural models, while others embraced rigid and reactionary interpretations of the past, seeking to revive it without critically understanding it or reinterpreting it in light of contemporary realities. Both tendencies contributed to deepening cultural conflict. As a result, shared moral values gradually weakened, and many positive social norms and traditions lost their binding force. The intellectual elite became increasingly ineffective in enhancing meaningful social change, while educational institutions remained rigid and unable to keep pace with the rapid transformations of "the modern era or to respond effectively to contemporary needs without sacrificing cultural authenticity"¹³. These developments have contributed to the erosion of the Arab individual's authentic cultural foundations and increased attraction to the material values related to Western societies. As a consequence, many people have become increasingly detached from their history, cultural heritage, and social environment. In numerous Arab societies, contemporary patterns of dress, language, beliefs, and values have come to reflect strong Western influences. Those fortunate enough to improve their circumstances have managed to escape difficult living conditions, whereas many others have come to regard illegal migration as their only hope of overcoming hardship and achieving their aspirations.

Second: Reinvigorating Education Through Its Diverse Roles

¹² Al-Riyachi, Slimane, et al. *The Algerian Crisis: Political, Social, Economic, and Cultural Backgrounds*. Beirut, Lebanon: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2nd ed., 1999, p. 444.

¹³ Ishaq Ahmed Farhat. *The Crisis of Education in the Arab World*. Dar Al-Furqan, 2nd ed., 2000, p. 22.

Education may be considered the means through which individuals and societies are prepared to confront the challenges of life by equipping them with the skills necessary to earn a livelihood and by providing them with the cultural values and standards that enable them to preserve their identity without being assimilated into other cultures¹⁴. “Education is neither exclusive nor intended for a particular group; rather, it includes all members of society without exception. It begins at birth and continues throughout an individual's life, enabling people to overcome obstacles and sustain their personal and social development. As such, education constitutes a social necessity imposed by both human needs and continuous social change. Therefore, society prepares individuals to integrate into the social order, acquire its culture, and preserve its values. Accordingly, education plays a fundamental role in promoting culture, safeguarding heritage and social values, and facilitating individuals' participation in development and civilizational progress. Society constantly depends on education, both as a guiding principle and as a practical endeavor, because it has the capacity to transform stagnation into dynamism, backwardness into progress, and unproductiveness into creativity. From this perspective, investment in education represents an extension of Human Capital Theory, one of the most influential theoretical frameworks developed during the 1950s and 1960s. This approach was largely shaped by the work of Theodore W. Schultz (1902–1998), whose research emphasized the relationship between education, the educational system, and other social institutions, as well as the relationship between educational inputs and outputs in preparing the labor force. Schultz viewed education as a form of economic investment. Through education, the educational system is directly linked to industrial production because it supplies modern technological sectors with qualified technicians, specialists, and experts. Well-educated and professionally trained individuals are capable of operating advanced technologies and contributing effectively to production and economic development. As a result, economists and policymakers increasingly examined the dynamics of education through the performance of schools as productive institutions. Their analyses focused on instructional time, educational quality, the nature of academic disciplines, and the relevance of specialization to labor market demands in accordance with the principles of supply and demand. This perspective underscores the significance of improving every qualitative aspect of education and ensuring high educational standards to build a strong and competitive economy”. Consequently, an increasing number of countries have introduced national learning assessments that evaluate learners' knowledge, skills, and competencies. Within this framework, improvements in individuals' material well-being and economic productivity are frequently regarded as indicators of educational success.

A. The Cultural Role of Education in Reducing Illegal Migration

Illegal migration has become a widespread social phenomenon affecting individuals regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or cultural background. Every individual is the product of the social and natural environment in which they are raised from early childhood. As a result, a genuine understanding of illegal migration requires examining childhood, since it constitutes the most formative phase of human development. Childhood extends from birth to adolescence and passes through several developmental phases. It begins with infancy (birth to two years), followed by early childhood (two to five years), middle childhood (five to eleven years), and late childhood (from approximately eleven years until adolescence). In legal terms, a child is generally defined as any

¹⁴ Said Cherifi. “The Educational Dimension in the Philosophy of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwan al-Safa).” *Journal of Education and Epistemology*, Higher School of Teachers, Bouzaréah, no. 4, 2013, p. 102.

person under the age of sixteen unless the age of majority is attained earlier under applicable law. Children are highly impressionable and readily influenced by their surrounding environment. As a consequence, parents bear primary responsibility for nurturing and guiding them. Depending on the quality of this upbringing, a child may develop into a psychologically balanced and emotionally stable individual or, conversely, experience psychological and behavioural difficulties. Such outcomes may result from the influence of the father, the mother, both parents, or, in certain circumstances, factors associated with the child. Therefore, childhood constitutes the essential foundation upon which an individual's personality is built. A child's development is shaped by various educational and social environments that contribute to moral guidance, behavioral formation, and the internalization of cultural values, customs, and social norms. These environments include the family, the school, peers, the media, and other social institutions. Since education is a lifelong process that begins at birth and continues until the end of life, it is recognized as a fundamental human right guaranteed by national legislation and international conventions. Likewise, it is considered a religious obligation in the revealed religions, encompassing Islam, which places great emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge and regards learning as a measure of human excellence. Accordingly, education is one of the child's most fundamental rights. Learning begins at birth through care, guidance, and intellectual stimulation, laying the foundation for subsequent phases of development. The school then assumes a complementary role by enabling children to explore the world around them, interact with their peers, and acquire the basic skills of reading, writing, drawing, and artistic expression. These experiences contribute to the rapid development of their cognitive abilities and the acquisition of the skills necessary for the formation of their personalities. However, this fundamental right is frequently denied or violated. Many children remain deprived of education because of armed conflict, harsh social conditions, poverty, deprivation, and other adverse circumstances.

For this reason, it is essential to provide a sound educational environment that guarantees children's rights. Therefore, every educational reform should be based on the realities and needs of society by creating learning environments that are appropriate to children's developmental features. Educational reform should promote sound and balanced education grounded in modern educational theories and reaching methods capable of enhancing learning outcomes for children from all social backgrounds. It should also recognize pupils' educational, psychological, and social needs, address the challenges they encounter, and maintain an appropriate balance between academic instruction and character development. This responsibility is shared by schools and families alike. Accordingly, educational reform should clearly define parental roles and responsibilities while encouraging parents to participate in the development, evaluation, and continuous improvement of school curricula. A supportive and understanding parent can foster a child's self-confidence, enabling them to approach life with confidence rather than fear or hesitation. Likewise, when schools and families work in partnership, they contribute significantly to the child's psychological well-being and social adjustment. Thus, the relationship between education and culture is profound and inseparable. Any weakness or failure within the educational system inevitably undermines the educational project as a whole, resulting in contradictions in ideas, beliefs, and values and ultimately leading to cultural imbalance within society. Such imbalance may give rise to collective cultural alienation and intellectual dependency, whether manifested through cultural domination, uncritical imitation, or excessive susceptibility to external influences. Ultimately, these conditions generate serious

intellectual, ideological, linguistic, and moral challenges that threaten the cohesion, stability, and long-term development of the state.

If education constitutes an essential element of a society's culture, then educational practice is the primary means through which culture is transmitted, developed, and sustained across generations. Therefore, learning and teaching are the principal vehicles for cultural transmission, while education serves as the cornerstone of a society's cultural security by fostering adaptation, social cohesion, coexistence, and mutual understanding among its members. From this perspective, the cultural and intellectual challenges confronting contemporary Arab societies reflect the prolonged stagnation and inertia of successive generations. The legacy of colonialism, the setbacks of the Arab renaissance, and the failure of successive development projects have left generations unable to generate intellectual dynamism or contribute creatively to social and cultural advancement. Instead, there has been a tendency to glorify an idealized past that no longer possesses the conditions necessary for contemporary success, relying on nostalgia for former achievements rather than producing innovative solutions to present-day realities. Even more concerning is the appearance of intellectual currents that advocate adopting the Western model as the sole criterion of progress, arguing that whatever has succeeded in the West will inevitably succeed in the Arab world. These currents are viewed as culturally alien and detached from authentic identity. Conversely, other reactionary movements call for preserving heritage exactly as it is, without critical reinterpretation or adaptation to contemporary realities, thus promoting intellectual isolation and social stagnation. As a result, Arab societies appear to face two equally problematic alternatives: cultural alienation and assimilation on the one hand, or isolation and withdrawal into the past on the other. Both reflect an inability to generate creative solutions and meaningful alternatives.

Educational curricula, instructional content, innovative teaching methods, and educational technologies constitute complementary pillars of an effective educational system. Any imbalance among these components inevitably undermines educational outcomes, resulting in what may metaphorically be described as the "distorted birth" of the individual whom education seeks to develop. The desired educational model is one that harmonizes the enduring values of the past with the realities and opportunities of the present, since the integration of heritage and modernity provides the foundation for the future. Conversely, detachment from the past, manifested in the weakening of national values and cultural identity, encourages the search for alternative cultural references, whether linguistic, moral, or religious. Such circumstances promote cultural alienation, intellectual dependency, and vulnerability to cultural domination. This challenge is further intensified by contemporary technology, which possesses an unprecedented capacity to disseminate films, digital content, music, and other cultural products capable of shaping generations according to particular ideological and cultural agendas. This influence becomes even more significant in societies where educational deficiencies have weakened the critical capacities required for participation in the knowledge society, lifelong learning, and intercultural dialogue.¹⁵

B. The Social Role of Education in Reducing Illegal Migration

The deterioration of education in numerous developing countries, particularly in the Arab world, has contributed to the emergence of societies in which many individuals possess only limited educational attainment, often reading without genuine comprehension. Such conditions encourage retreat into the

¹⁵ Nabil Ali. Arab Culture and the Information Age. Alam Al-Ma'rifah Series. Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, no edition, 2001, p. 166.

past, the idealization of inherited traditions, and resistance to innovation and change. At the same time, when confronted with persistent social and economic challenges, many perceive the Western model as the only viable remedy for their difficulties. The persistence of widespread illiteracy is a clear manifestation of this educational crisis. According to the latest report issued by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the illiteracy rate in the Arab region has reached approximately 21 percent. By 2015, the number of illiterate adults in the Arab world had risen to nearly 54 million. Moreover, as a consequence of political instability, armed conflict, and regional wars, more than 13.5 million children either dropped out of school or were never enrolled in formal education. The report also demonstrates significant gender disparities, with the illiteracy rate estimated at approximately 14.6 percent among males and 25.9 percent among females¹⁶. Likewise, the report issued during the Third Meeting of the Higher Coordination Committee for the Arab Decade for Literacy (2015–2024), organized by the League of Arab States through its Social Affairs Sector and the Department of Education, Culture, and Scientific Research, and emphasized the seriousness of the widespread persistence of illiteracy and the continued neglect of women's education. Among its principal recommendations was the need for stronger coordination between ALECSO, Arab governments, research institutions, and specialized organizations to establish a minimum framework of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes expected of a literate citizen. Such a framework would provide a more comprehensive definition of literacy than the current reliance solely on age and years of schooling.¹⁷

Therefore, the shortcomings of educational systems have contributed to “the emergence of societies in which many individuals lack the minimum knowledge and skills required for effective participation in contemporary society. Detached from the intellectual and cultural demands of their time, men and women alike, regardless of age, often remain inadequately prepared to contribute to social development, generate innovative solutions, or participate meaningfully in sustainable development. In turn, these conditions reinforce the structural factors that encourage illegal migration as a perceived pathway toward a better future. The absence of an effective role for schools in developing well-rounded individuals has resulted in what has been described as “the absence of rationality and social organization, leading to social disorder and a widespread sense of deprivation¹⁸.” As a result, responsibility for addressing social problems has gradually shifted away from educational institutions, scientific research centers, and strategic planning bodies toward the executive branch of government. In effect, political authority has increasingly assumed functions that traditionally belonged to the educational system, reflecting the perception that schools have failed to achieve their educational mission or fulfill their intended objectives. Consequently, the state has sought to reshape society and redefine its values and aspirations. In this context, socialization becomes a matter of fundamental significance because of its profound influence on both individuals and society, particularly in confronting negative social phenomenon and promoting social awareness. “Socialization may be defined as a process of learning, education, and upbringing based on social interaction, through which individuals, from childhood and adolescence to adulthood and old age, acquire the behaviors, norms, and attitudes appropriate to their social roles. This process enables them

¹⁶ Al-Araby Al-Jadeed. A Comprehensive Political Daily Newspaper. London, Issue No. 1429, 2018.

¹⁷ League of Arab States. Third Meeting of the Higher Coordination Committee for the Arab Decade for Literacy (2015–2024): Report and Recommendations. Cairo: League of Arab States, 2017, Recommendations section, p. 5.

¹⁸ Burhan Ghalioun. States Against the Nation. Beirut, Lebanon: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 3rd ed., 2003, p. 191.

to adapt to society, achieve social integration, develop a social identity, and participate effectively in community life”¹⁹. Therefore, the relationship between the individual and society is continuous and reciprocal. Through social awareness and interaction, individuals come to understand both their own behaviour and that of others, thereby enhancing social cohesion and cooperation within the community. Such positive social integration reflects the individual's willingness to contribute to social development and to participate actively in the multiple cultural dimensions of community life. The social system is characterized by the intentionality of its objectives, as it constitutes the most effective means of organizing human relationships and fulfilling the optimal adaptation of individuals to the prevailing values and culture. Education serves as the vital link between society and the individual. Through social education, individuals' positions and roles are determined according to their abilities and skills, enabling society to function as an integrated and harmonious whole, free from tensions and conflicts. Within the social system, education connects individuals to their past while preparing them for the future. Societies are the product of accumulated historical experiences and the foundation for future development. As a result, education preserves and protects the social order by integrating individual activities with collective action, thus fostering balance and dynamism within society. At the same time, society achieves its role in maintaining the stability and security of the community and in shaping social institutions through social control, which is defined as: "the symbolic mechanisms developed by humankind, either intentionally or unintentionally, to exert psychological pressure."²⁰

Social control represents the means through which society establishes and enforces its norms, values, and patterns of behavior in order to preserve social order and stability. It functions as a mechanism of regulation, protection, and deterrence. The methods of social control vary according to the nature of societies and the features of their prevailing cultures, as illustrated by the differences between traditional and modern societies. These methods are reflected in educational philosophies, practices, and objectives. Accordingly, education seeks to foster harmony and compatibility between the individual and society by shaping individual behaviour in accordance with prevailing cultural frameworks and accepted social norms.

Thus, education is a means of fulfilling social stability as well as moral and intellectual regulation. It supports and reinforces social control, making it flexible and adaptable, since changes in social systems are accompanied by corresponding changes in educational methods and mechanisms of social control.

Education and social control also work together to guide, regulate, and clarify human behavior by defining what ought to be and what is considered socially acceptable. This helps prevent any contradiction between an individual's conduct and the values, expectations, and objectives of society. Accordingly, social control, with education serving as its primary foundation, exercises authority and regulation over individuals. However, this is a positive form of control, as it encourages and motivates individuals to adhere to socially desirable norms of behavior. It is not grounded in coercion or violence; rather, it is a constructive process governed by the rule of law, moral and religious principles, and socially accepted customs and values.

¹⁹ Salah Eddine Cherroukhe. *Educational Sociology*. Annaba, Algeria: Dar Al-Olum for Publishing and Distribution, no edition, 2004, p. 57.

²⁰ Salah Eddine Cherroukhe. *Educational Sociology*. Ibid., p. 99.

The institutions of social control are embodied in a wide range of organizations and mechanisms, encompassing the media, libraries, courts, legal systems, and educational institutions. The effectiveness of social control depends largely on the integration and coordination of these institutions, particularly through fostering the role of educational institutions, including mosques, in enhancing ethical social relationships founded on mutual respect, acceptance of others, and the promotion of a culture of peace, coexistence, and respect for human rights.

Recommendations

The following recommendations may contribute to preventing and mitigating the phenomenon of illegal migration at both the individual and societal levels:

- Revise and modernize educational curricula to make them more responsive to contemporary developments and emerging challenges while promoting their effectiveness in fulfilling educational and pedagogical objectives.
- Enhance societal development and capacity building through a comprehensive understanding of society's identity, values, culture, features, developmental priorities, and evolving needs.
- Strengthen the integration between schools and the social and economic environment, recognizing that schools constitute the cornerstone of state-building, social development, and the preparation of a skilled workforce capable of promoting economic prosperity and social well-being.
- Promote educational awareness as the foundation for developing creative, critical, and responsible individuals by addressing negative behaviors and reinforcing positive values and attitudes.

Conclusion

Societal progress begins with transforming how individuals perceive themselves, their society, and the world around them. Therefore, addressing the phenomenon of illegal migration requires a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships among local, regional, and international actors, as well as the legal frameworks governing international relations, international treaties, and global agreements. It also necessitates strengthening cooperation among Arab states and fostering constructive partnerships with developed countries. Moreover, economic and political reform constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for reducing migration in all its forms. Sustainable development programs, together with the effective management and investment of both natural and human resources, provide the foundation for economic prosperity and social well-being. Accordingly, the Arab world must base its renaissance on investment in human capital. Developing the intellectual, scientific, and technological capacities of Arab citizens is essential to achieving genuine civilizational advancement. Building a progressive and prosperous society requires harmony between school education, family upbringing, and the broader social culture. As previously noted, contemporary global challenges call for greater Arab cooperation aimed at enhancing a cohesive Arab society unifies in its educational philosophies, methods, and objectives while remaining firmly rooted in the historical and cultural heritage of the Arab nation. Societal progress cannot emerge in isolation or from a historical vacuum. Rather, it requires both inward openness, to understand and capitalize on existing capacities and resources, and outward openness to benefit from scientific advances, innovative practices, and contemporary knowledge. Such a balanced approach can contribute to building an Arab society that remains faithful to its values and heritage while successfully adapting to the demands of an ever-changing world.

The Arab world possesses considerable human, cultural, and material resources capable of positioning it as a leading contributor to global civilization, provided these resources are effectively managed and invested in strengthening internal unity and sustainable development. Education, knowledge, and Arab culture collectively provide the foundation for the desired model of development, one capable of inspiring societies and stimulating intellectual progress. Striking an appropriate balance between openness to the world and the preservation of cultural identity constitutes a fundamental safeguard for the future of the Arab world, and it is toward this objective that contemporary Arab education should aspire. Indeed, at the height of its civilization, the Arab-Islamic world offered an enduring model of coexistence, intercultural exchange, and the affirmation of cultural identity while remaining open to knowledge and innovation.

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