

The Immigration of the Algerian Youth to Europe, Causes and Effects

هجرة الشباب الجزائري إلى أوروبا أسبابها وآثارها

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Abstract; Every year, millions of young people in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco choose to leave their homelands to other countries seeking a better life, hoping to improve their situations, get good jobs, realize the "European Dream" of becoming documented immigrants. The perception of Europe is so positive as if it were "Paradise". The common point between all those immigrants is that they took major risks especially when they decide to come via the sea. Some of them arrived while others died or drowned. Of course, almost all of them chose to leave their mother countries almost for similar reasons, either pushed or attracted by many different factors. Arriving in Europe, many of them succeed while others suffer from psychological disorders, jailed, fail or simply choose to return to their countries. In this article, light will be shed on the different push and pull factors and the deep consequences of immigration on the homeland and the host country as well.

Keywords; immigration, opportunities, native, , assimilation, discrimination,

الملخص: كل عام ، يختار الملايين من الشباب في الجزائر وتونس والمغرب ترك أوطانهم إلى بلدان أخرى يسعون إلى حياة أفضل ، أملين في تحسين أوضاعهم ، والحصول على وظائف جيدة ، وتحقيق "الحلم الأوروبي" و هو أن يصبحوا مهاجرين موثقين. إن تصورهم لأوروبا إيجابي للغاية كما لو كانت "الجنة". النقطة المشتركة بين جميع هؤلاء المهاجرين هي أنهم خاطروا بشكل كبير خاصة عندما قرروا القدوم عبر البحر. وصل بعضهم بينما مات آخرون أو غرقوا. بالطبع ، اختار جميعهم تقريباً مغادرة بلدانهم الأم لأسباب متشابهة تقريباً ، إما بدافع أو لانجذابهم لعدد العوامل المختلفة. عند الوصول إلى أوروبا ، ينجح العديد منهم بينما يعاني الآخرون من اضطرابات نفسية ، يسجنون ، يفشلون ، أو ببساطة يختارون العودة إلى بلدانهم. في هذه المقالة ، سيتم تسليط الضوء على عوامل الدفع والجذب المختلفة والعواقب العميقة للهجرة على الوطن والبلد المضيف أيضاً.

الكلمات المفتاحية؛ الهجرة، الفرص ، ، مواطن، استيعاب، تمييز،

1. Introduction

Annually, many young Algerian people choose to leave their native countries to other nations be them European, Canadian, Asian, or American. Their major purpose is to get permanent residence or citizenship after the process of naturalization. It is hard to say to what extent immigration can be beneficial either to the mother countries or the receiving ones but mostly it has positive outcomes mainly on the economy of both countries. However, the level and education of immigrants determine the effects be they economic or social on both the sending countries and the receiving ones. Research has shown that immigration is facilitated and more immigrants are allowed to enter developed countries mainly those coming from developing nations will certainly lower the levels of poverty. Immigration can also be very positive as it builds multicultural societies which have become more diverse and this means richness with some exceptions.

Immigration took various shapes and reasons throughout history. For instance, many Algerian citizens chose to move to France after Independence in order to get jobs, improve their standards of living and help their families financially. They thought that because they were colonized by France, they were more welcome than other immigrants. Of course, those early immigrants to France participated in the rebuilding of the infrastructure by working in heavy industry such as railroads, trains and mines. They also worked in health services and transportation. Nevertheless, those immigrants suffered from discrimination that led to the isolation of minorities. Some European countries decided to stop the influx of immigrants while others preferred the amalgamation of different ethnic groups.

2. What is immigration?

Immigration is the movement from one's homeland to another foreign nation where immigrants intend to settle either for a short period of life or permanently. They are attracted by many factors, mainly economic such as

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gaining good jobs with higher salaries, live in better conditions and even have the possibility to invest and find different opportunities in addition to gaining high-quality instruction. Immigrants are also pushed by factors like persecution, war or terrorism, and political control like in countries where the regime is totalitarian. They either ask for a visa to France or Spain or take more risks and choose the sea to leave the mother country. It goes without saying that this increase in immigration has impacted both the home countries and the host ones.

Researchers believe that the immigration rate is increasing and will continue to increase in the next few years. According to a Gallup survey conducted in the year 2012, results showed that around 640 million immigrants would leave their homeland if they were given a chance. In 2005, the United Nations declared that there exist around 191 million immigrants from different nations, which means 3% of the world's inhabitants. Most of those immigrants left their mother countries to Europe (70%), the United States (45%) and Asia (25%) according to a UN survey conducted in the year 2006.

European nations signed the Schengen Agreement in Luxembourg to put an end to the frontier checkpoints. The European Council in Finland in 1999 agreed on the Law of Asylum and Immigration in the European Union (IEU). This law deals with immigration in the European Economic Area (EEA). It clearly states that citizens of European countries are entitled to citizenship and can live and work in any European area. Thanks to this law, many newcomers benefited from several services such as Social Security and housing... etc.

3. The push and pull factors of immigration

Many Algerian young people have chosen to leave their homeland to Europe for so many reasons. They are either pushed by factors or attracted by others. In this section, we are going to tackle both the push and pull factors.

3.1. The push factors: are the reasons that push immigrants to leave their countries and settle abroad. They are summarized in the following points;

3.1.1. The scarcity of jobs the lack of employment opportunities: truly have pushed young Algerians and Africans to go to Europe or Canada for more jobs to achieve all their dreams, namely a house, a car and a good job. The majority of those people have tried a lot to ameliorate their situations by accepting all types of employment including very low-paying jobs. However, because these jobs are not good enough, they failed to achieve their dreams. For them, leaving their countries would enable them to get the "Euro"; a currency that equals 20 doubles the Algerian dinars.

3.1.2. The lack of investment and economic opportunities:

Many Algerian companies prefer to hire foreigners like Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, and/or Egyptians instead of recruiting Algerians. They are convinced that those foreigners provide high-quality services although their salaries are far much higher than Algerian salaries. Consequently, young Algerian workers fail to start their own projects or join companies not because of the lack of qualifications but because of the lack of experience and opportunities. Still, others work hard to start small businesses but they face many obstacles like taxes, documents, stamps, shops renting and credits and loans provided by banks. As a result, they abandon their projects, not because of the lack of patience and/or perseverance but because they failed to see the light of success. They lose the best years of their lives waiting without any tangible achievements.

3.1.3. Poverty:

Most Algerian people live below the minimum level of good living standards, as the lowest salary in Algeria is less than 100 Euro. Moreover, some families do not have any incomes, not even governmental aids. In addition, handicapped people receive a very low pension of about 20 Euros while many families cannot even afford the basic minimum conditions like central heaters, healthy food, mineral water, air conditioning, a car and decent clothes,...etc. Children who are born to poor families drop school early because their parents fail to supply them with the necessary means

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like books, dictionaries, bags, transportation fees and enough food to eat. Of course, when these teenagers leave school before the minimum legal age of 16, they tend to fall into the trap delinquency.

3.1.4. Delinquency

Some teenagers and young people choose not to face their daily problems but to escape them either by taking drugs, drinking alcohol, stealing others to get money, robbing banks and groceries. In addition to all these social phenomena, the level of crime increased mainly as the result of poverty and early dropping of school. Those children believe that the easiest way to become rich is to trade in drugs. Once they become fully dependent, criminals use youngster to do some missions of selling drugs, carrying them from one area to another, keeping an eye on police officers, or even killing some members who choose to quit or withdraw. It goes without saying that the deep consequences are dependency, addiction, going to jail and of course the last option left is leaving Algeria illegally. In such a way, they run from drug dealers and fall into the trap of other criminals who smuggle youngsters to the other side of the sea, Generally to Spain or Italy. While very few arrive safely, others die or disappear of whom their families never heard any news.

3.1.5. Freedom restriction:

The majority of Algerians face many difficulties especially when they want to travel. If they do not have enough qualifications and a permanent job in Algeria, enough money in their bank account they are not generally granted the Visa Schengen. They keep trying till they decide to leave Algeria with whatever means they might use. In addition, because of poverty, their travel experience is very limited even inside Algeria for so many reasons mainly the transportation fees, security and expensive hotels. For instance, travelling to Algerian Sahara is more costly than travelling to Tunisia or Turkey. Consequently, youngsters feel really limited and with a lot of restrictions and they even feel like strangers in their own country.

They either turn to drugs or social ills but there are others who prefer sports. However, during football matches, if the team they support loses the match, they start breaking and burning. Their reaction is rarely understood

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by the media, their community and/or the government. They are viewed as violent, ignorant and irresponsible which push them to leave their country to any European nation where nobody judges them and where they can start anew. For them, going to Europe will open more doors and this means freedom. They can work, dream, dance, live, breathe, and get married to a "blonde-haired woman" to be able to achieve the "European Dream" and become a documented immigrant.

3.2. The pull factors:

The pull factors are those reasons that attract young Algerian people to leave their countries and settle in Europe. For instance;

3.2.1. The good living standards

Immigrants to European countries aspire to find housing, accommodation, jobs, security and the well-being mainly "the peace of mind". Nevertheless, it is very hard for undocumented immigrants to rent a house. Yet, most of them are kept in camps or seek the help of associations, which provide food, accommodation, medical insurance and transportation of about 20 Euros a month. Documented immigrants, on the other hand, can rent a flat, find a job or two and improve their standards of living. They certainly find better health conditions and good treatment.

3.2.2. Better universities: some young people choose to move to Europe in order to pursue their studies and start a career. They believe that the quality of education, the availability of books as well as the levels of professors is far better than professors in their countries are. Some immigrants really achieved good results and are generally hired to very high positions (ambassadors, MP's, doctors, professors, etc). Their salaries are far higher than those they used to get in their countries. This certainly keeps them motivated to work hard in order to afford a big house in the mother country, a car and enough money.

The consequences of immigration on the homeland and the host countries

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The immigration of the Algerian youth to Europe has many effects on the personal level and on the sending and receiving countries in so many ways. What follows are some consequences which are judged to be the most important.

3.3. The negative consequences of immigration

Immigrants leave their homelands full of hopes, wishes and dreams aspiring to ameliorate their standards of living. They ignore that immigration is not only positive, but it can also be so negative in many ways.

Regardless of immigration factors or reasons, nearly all immigrants left their countries in order to start anew and find more opportunities. However, they faced the shocking reality of paying expensive charges such as rent, electricity, internet bill, taxes, and petrol ...etc. Some of these problems can easily be overcome with a good job and a good salary. However, other problems like assimilation and adjustment into the new community, whether or not to keep their specific markers and the way to raise their children, are really challenging issues for any immigrant. Very few immigrants, if any, teach their children Arabic and/or Islamic rules. After all, they are Arabs and Muslims born on the French soil and thus entitled to French citizenship.

3.4. Positive consequences of immigration

The effects of immigration can be both positive and negative on the receiving nations and the sending ones including the rate of inhabitants, jobs and productivity. Immigration sometimes increases the supply of workers in the host nations but those countries are affected in a negative way when it comes to national security, the lack of jobs, health services and inhabitants surges.

For the homeland, immigration has deep consequences on the economy, which will certainly grow weaker due to the decrease in the number of inhabitants, less production, and hence less economic spending.

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The majority of immigrants accept to work at very low-paying jobs once they arrive to Europe until they can adapt to the society where they live, to be able to rent a flat, and start school for their children. For them, it can be challenging to learn the language of the host country, its laws and adopt its mode of life. It is true that most immigrants fled discrimination in their homeland but they were unaware that they would face discrimination and racism where they immigrated too.

It is worth mentioning the immigration is by no means easy, but staying at ones father's land does not always mean a bright future. As a result, most young people from Algeria or Africa are willing to go abroad so as to improve their standards of living and become successful although it can be very difficult and challenging he effects on the homeland include the loss of immigrants. This may result in a weakness in its economy, a decrease in population and the loss of highly skilled workers.

4. Conclusion

More recently, immigration has become a widespread phenomenon with a very large impact on both the homeland and the host country. In Algeria, immigration whether legal or illegal has attracted the attention of the media, the society and the government all of which are trying to find a solution to minimize the number of immigrants to Europe. Many immigrants have chosen to leave their countries and settle abroad for so many reasons be they economic, political, social or religious. The economic reasons include the scarcity of jobs, lack of economic opportunities, very low wages while the political include the desire to live under a more democratic system with which one can have more rights and be at ease while performing their duties. Of course, the majority of immigrants have at least one of their family members abroad so family reunification can also be a solid reason for leaving one's homeland.

In fact, immigration to Europe can be very challenging and with deep consequences let alone the fact that it is very expensive and with very heavy

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procedures. Once they reach Europe, they face many obstacles to adjust to the new life, in addition to discrimination, bullying and racism. They accept low paying jobs at the beginning to be able to rent a house and settle down. Another challenge they face is the necessity to learn the language of the host country and even adapt to its culture or should they? Here, they face a big issue are they going to assimilate and become more successful or keep their specific markers and remain strangers for the rest of their lives? Another big issue is “Islamophobia”. Those immigrants who wear the scarf or the beard are most of the time perceived as terrorists, which may hinder their advancement as opposed to those immigrants who do not demonstrate any religious sign.

Therefore, the impacts can be very deep on individuals, their homeland, and the receiving countries as well. They fled persecution to face racism and judgments. The sending countries lost the best elites of the nation (brain drain) which resulted in a loss of highly-skilled workers and a slowing in the pace of development. Finally, the receiving countries are struggling with the huge waves of African countries annually thus issuing more immigration laws that are affecting everyone in the nation nowadays. To this end, one should view immigration as a sword with two edges. It can be beneficial because some immigrants choose to return to their homelands and invest in agriculture, factories and trade while others supply their family members financially through their high salaries from the host country they immigrated to. No one can judge them nor can we say that immigration is negative as long as individuals are free to decide for themselves and for the way to live in their own way. They justify with a statement "where there is bread there is one's father's land"

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