

## Alienation for Reconciliation: Saving Iraq Displaced and Refugee Children

Haider Salah Alose

Jordan University

[haideraloose76@gmail.com](mailto:haideraloose76@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

*This study examines the psychological trauma that continues to shape the minds of Iraqis and disrupt their behavior within educational environments. The problem emerges from decades of war, internal displacement, deprivation of basic needs, and the chronic absence of healthcare services, conditions locally expressed through the concept of Makoo, signifying prolonged scarcity and loss. Using the International Social Service (ISS) model for psychological rehabilitation and drawing conceptually on Noam Chomsky's views on the reconstruction of displaced societies, the study analyzes how trauma reshapes children's cognitive development, ethical awareness, and motivation toward schooling. Qualitative observations from displacement zones, particularly the Al-Hol camp, reveal that such environments metaphorically resemble "sterile land," unable to foster stable learning, identity formation, or emotional growth. The findings suggest that educational decline in these regions is directly linked to accumulated psychological burdens. Accordingly, the study proposes developing idealized school-based micro-communities functioning as temporary protective institutions within these deteriorating environments that provide structured learning, psychological recovery, and moral stabilization. The results indicate that such specialized centers, though requiring targeted financial planning, could interrupt current cycles of deterioration and create pathways toward healthy reintegration and long-term educational resilience.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over many decades of war, economic hardship, and deprivation, Iraqi society has endured a form of systemic indoctrination, which has left its population anxious and fearful about the future. The *Iraq-Iran War* (1980–1988), the *Gulf War* (1990), the destruction of the Iraqi army, the subsequent economic sanctions (1990–2003), and the collapse of the Iraqi regime, all compounded by sectarian conflict and the ISIS occupation in western Iraq, have produced societies deeply affected by psychological and social trauma. Chronic financial and administrative corruption has further exacerbated these conditions. As a result, many Iraqis have grown accustomed to the absence of necessities such as electricity, fuel, clean water, and medical services. Over time, this pervasive scarcity has come to be described locally as *Makkoo*, denoting a state of chronic insufficiency in every aspect of life.

In a prominent book entitled *The Siege and Its Effects on Human Rights*, Alaa El-Din Saadi (2021) examined the sieges imposed on both Iraq and the Gaza Strip as real-world cases

illustrating the negative consequences of blockades on fundamental human rights. The study concluded that such conditions lead to numerous violations, most notably infringements on civil and political rights, particularly the right to life. It also highlighted the restriction of freedom of movement and personal security, alongside the resulting fear, instability, and psychological distress experienced by affected populations (Al-Hajri, 2021).

Similarly, a 2025 working paper from the Research and Studies Unit at PalThink for Strategic Studies elaborates that “the massive displacement, accompanied by unprecedented levels of destruction, led to the disintegration of traditional family ties and the erosion of community support networks. These scholarly works demonstrate that new behavioral patterns emerged, dominated by a logic of individual survival, tension, and symbolic violence in the absence of security and amid scarcity of basic resources” (PalThink Research and Studies Unit, 2025).

This insufficiency has extended beyond basic needs, advancing into deeper forms of societal deformity and contributing to what is known as epistemicide. According to Assistant Professor Beth Patin, in her work *Nurturing Knowledge: Ending Epistemicide, Transforming Education, Strengthening Communities*, “The word epistemicide was coined in 1998 by sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos, who wrote, ‘Unequal exchanges amongst cultures have always implied the death of the knowledge of the subordinated culture, and hence the death of the social groups that possessed it’” (Patin, 2024). In this context, Iraqi society has been profoundly altered over many years of invasion, instability, and repeated crises. Iraqis have become accustomed to living in a prolonged state of urgency, shaped by uncertainty and deprivation. Consequently, a substitutive culture emerged, marked by inconsistent behaviors and a detachment from foundational cultural values. Many have abandoned aspects of their historical identity and adopted patterns influenced by external dominance. In this sense, Iraqis have reacted against the harshness of their past and redirected their identities and relationships toward new forms aligned with future aspirations.

This study aims to examine the complex relationship between displacement, war, and the emergence of abnormal family dynamics among populations exposed to harsh conditions such as occupation, bombing, dictatorship, and civil conflict. It examines how these circumstances affect individuals’ ability to raise their children in a stable, constructive manner. Furthermore, the study analyzes the intervention processes applied by the International Social Service (ISS) in Iraq and evaluates the feasibility of extending these practices to schools across the Middle East. It also considers Noam Chomsky’s perspective on education as a framework

for rehabilitating displaced communities, while exploring the possibility of establishing new school structures that function as alternative educational families for vulnerable displaced children. Such structures could help safeguard these children from cognitive harm, moral deterioration, and social fragmentation within their impoverished environments. The ultimate goal is to foster moral resilience, psychological stability, and ethical reintegration. Importantly, this approach is not presented as theoretical speculation but as a practical, carefully developed model.

To guide this investigation, the study poses several core questions: Can the current school system transcend its traditional, rote-based learning model? Can educational institutions in politically and socially distressed regions cultivate a generation inclined toward creativity and innovation rather than passive consumption? How can Chomsky's pedagogical principles be meaningfully applied within such environments? Most crucially, can schools serve as surrogate families for displaced and disadvantaged children? The study argues that families burdened by prolonged trauma often lack the capacity to adequately nurture, educate, or emotionally support their children, which necessitates alternative educational structures that provide stability and care.

To accomplish these aims, the study adopts a qualitative, literary-analytical approach. First, it analyzes the processes used by the International Social Service (ISS) to support deprived children worldwide and examines how this international institution views innocent victims of displacement and refugee crises. Second, by examining Noam Chomsky's ideas, the study presents his perspectives and explores the possibility of applying his educational principles within the Iraqi school system.

To guide this investigation, it is essential to address several key questions: What are the primary challenges confronting childhood in Iraq? How does the process of personal transformation occur for teenagers growing up in traumatic environments? What strategies are most effective in protecting Iraqi children, particularly through the adoption of practices from the International Social Service (ISS)? Finally, how can the passage of time be leveraged as a means to shield children from moral and ideological regression, as well as from educational and intellectual distortion?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Many studies are interested in addressing the situation of refugees and displaced persons, especially those who migrated to Europe, during the period from 2003 to 2020, as thousands of people migrated across the Mediterranean Sea fleeing wars, dictatorships, and poor social

and economic conditions. Because of their miserable situation, their compass produced dystopian scenes about events that revolved around kidnapping, murder, human trafficking, enforced disappearance and recruitment into terrorist organizations.

The 2017 study by Koehler provides a specialized framework for refugee education, highlighting both its strengths and limitations. In contrast, the 2019 review, led by Phil C. Langer and collaborators, focuses on the psychosocial needs of refugee children and youth, underscoring the critical roles of social support, security, and culturally sensitive care in their integration. The 2023 literature on refugee trauma sheds light on the various forms of trauma embedded within individuals and societies affected by displacement. The 2019 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report underscores the importance of inclusive and flexible educational approaches tailored to displaced populations, and of adapting learning methods to support refugee students better. Moreover, the principles implemented by the International Social Service (ISS) through practical interventions offer valuable guidance to organizations in the Middle East on providing support to refugee children that goes beyond formal schooling.

The study is grounded in five case studies. First, the 2019 report by PalThink for Strategic Studies (Phil C. Langer & Ayesha Nusrat Ahmed) investigates the psychosocial needs of children associated with ISIS and residing in Al-Hol camp. It finds that these children suffer severe psychological, health, and emotional problems, which demand long-term psychosocial support. The report connects these harms to the notion of “chain trauma” (or intergenerational trauma), a process by which traumatic stress and its causes are transmitted across generations (e.g., Carsten Becker & Castillo, 1990; Becker, 1992). This suggests that the trauma experienced by one generation can negatively affect subsequent ones, undermining their psychosocial well-being.

Secondly, the 2023 article by Seth Abrutyn, *The Roots of Social Trauma: Collective, Cultural Pain and Its Consequences*, elaborates on the distinction between individual trauma and its broader societal impact, showing how trauma can evolve into collective trauma. Collective trauma, as described by Abrutyn, emerges when social infrastructure collapses, including roles like motherhood, fatherhood, and grandparenthood, thereby undermining the foundational networks of society. Over time, this trauma can become cultural trauma: when a traumatized group becomes dominant, and its shared pain becomes encoded in collective identity, with long-term repercussions for social cohesion and intergroup relations. The study

outlines how individual social pain transitions into collective social trauma, eventually embedding itself in a community's social fabric and collective memory.

The work of the International Social Service Organization is highly relevant to this study. In 2017, at a Geneva meeting on children on the move, ISS published a set of guiding principles stating that refugee and migrant children must receive the highest priority and enjoy the same rights as other children, including the right to life, survival, and development. According to these principles, children should have the freedom to move across borders without being separated from their families, except when it is demonstrably in their best interests. No child should face discrimination based on family background, and all children, legitimate or not, are entitled to the same protections. Moreover, children have the right to express themselves freely on all matters affecting them, and their views must be taken into account in accordance with their language, beliefs, and religion. This study considers these principles as a potential standard for application in critical regions across the Middle East.

Finally, the 2020 OECD report identifies more inclusive education and emphasizes the necessity of comprehensive education that addresses all the needs of refugee students, including social, emotional, and academic needs. It conducted case studies of students and linked them to practical experience in Germany, Greece, and the Netherlands.

The studies discussed above highlight the importance of adopting appropriate methods to support refugees in the Middle East. However, they often overlook a critical reality: children resettled in Western countries frequently experience a profound sense of “in-betweenness” while maintaining continuous contact with their families back home. This uncertainty creates a psychological dilemma, leaving many children unsure whether they identify more with Western culture or the culture of their origins. Consequently, feelings of marginalization and alienation intensify, reinforcing nostalgia for their homeland. In response, this study proposes the creation of school-like camps within refugee settings, designed to support children experiencing psychological trauma. Operating from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., these schools provide a structured environment that minimizes exposure to family-related stressors, thereby reducing the intergenerational transmission of trauma and mitigating crises arising from conflicts between anxious parents and vulnerable children. Preliminary findings suggest that such environments, offering both visual and social separation, can positively influence the development of renewed social and cultural behaviors among children.

Thus, this study aims to draw upon these principles and efforts and apply them in specialized sites, such as schools located within war-affected areas in the Middle East, as a form of

childhood resettlement. The premise suggests that families in critical regions such as Iraq, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and others are no longer able, psychologically, socially, or economically, to bear the responsibilities of raising their children. Instead of forcing children to flee across the sea and face death, illegal smuggling, and other dangers, there is a realistic possibility of protecting and supporting them within their own environments, without exposing them to such life-threatening risks.

### **3. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study employs a qualitative, multi-methods approaches to explore the reason behind the impossibility of making locations as schools located within war-affected areas in the Middle East, dedicated to children only to protect them from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) of their families, throughout analyzing the specific problem the problem of childhood in Iraq as a case study, the process of transformation in the life of Iraqi Teenager, the way of saving Iraq by adopting the ISS experiences and Noam Chomsky's idea in education and finally, The possibility to build a healthy and peaceful society within a society suffering from psychological distress. Using the UNHCR Operational Data Report, ISS reports on children, and academic studies related to education and trauma, this study will find that there is a possibility of saving Iraq Displaced and Refugee Children by aligning them within schools as a safety zone within critical areas.

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section addresses the key challenges facing childhood in Iraq, the transformation process experienced by adolescents growing up in traumatic environments, and the most effective strategies for protecting Iraqi children. In particular, it highlights the potential of adopting practices from the International Social Service (ISS), leveraging time, and using learning as a tool to shield children from moral and ideological decline, as well as from educational and intellectual distortion. The goal is to support the reconstruction of children's identities in ways that help them recover from the impacts of their traumatic surroundings.

#### **4.1..The Problem of Childhood in Iraq**

In general, the Iraqi child, or the young girl, metaphorically, resembles a runaway lamb, searching for a place of safety and rescue from the destructive impulses within her own family, or what might be likened to an abattoir. There exists a silent struggle between the subconscious expectations of parents and the genuine needs of their children. According to Human Rights Watch, in its 40-page report *"My Marriage Was Mistake after Mistake"* (March 3, 2024),



“Religious leaders in Iraq conduct thousands of marriages each year, including child marriages, that flout Iraqi laws and are not officially registered” (HRW, 2024). Parents often wish to see their children as calm, respectful, witty, educated, and disciplined in the eyes of others, yet paradoxically, they fail to model consistent moral or behavioral principles themselves. This dissonance creates a deep misunderstanding between fathers and children: the child looks up to the parent as an ideal figure, while the parent remains largely indifferent to the child’s perception. Much of this misunderstanding stems from the absence of a stable and comfortable life in Iraq, which leaves many parents psychologically and socially unable to bear the responsibility of properly nurturing their children.

The main reasons behind the absence of a comfortable or stable life in Iraq are the following facts , firstly, according to the UNHCR Operational data portal in 31,12. 2024 , there are 2,930,022 of displacement Iraq refugges who laterly return to homeland areas after the ISIS bloody accidents in 2017, with reminants of thousand number who have never return to their homeland in *Jurf Al-Sakhar*, and in 2025, 20 camps for displaced people will still be open in Iraq (UNHCR,2025) .

Secondly, According to figures released by the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council for July 2025, approximately 22,677 marriages and 6,910 divorces were registered across various Iraqi provinces , this means the divorce rate is approximately 30.5% of the number of marriages in July 2025 (Al-Mustaqila,2025), Third, Bothoor Alkhayre Organization drew attention to the difficult conditions suffered by widows and orphans in Iraq, calling for the development of programs to employ them and lift them out of poverty. Official statistics conflict with the statistics of international organizations that have recorded the number of widows and orphans in Iraq. UNICEF, which is concerned with family and childhood, confirms that “there are about 3 million widows in Iraq, and more than 6 million orphans.” ( Bothoor ALkhaer, 2025) .

The absence of strong governmental oversight exacerbates this situation. Among the most critical factors are the widespread availability of weapons in the hands of political actors, the dominance of tribal law over institutional and civil law, and the concentration of substantial financial resources among influential figures and armed groups. Added to this is the persistence of administrative and financial corruption, alongside the absence of strategic planning in state governance. Furthermore, the presence of orphans, widows, displaced persons, and divorcees contributes to increasing social instability, resulting in fragmented communities lacking a cohesive identity. In this context, it is important to note that such circumstances are not exclusive to Iraq as a politically unstable state; similar patterns can be observed across other

regions of the Middle East that experience persistent social, political, cultural, and economic crises. Ultimately, the deterioration of childhood welfare represents one of the most critical forms of societal decline, as the harm inflicted upon children today reflects, and further deepens, the overall decadence of society.

From what was mentioned above, searching for a place to belong and to be rescued from the destructive forces becomes an impossible mission for Iraqi children. Yet, it is important to shed light on the way in which the teenager has tragically turned into a refugee or an intolerable person within his community.

#### **4.2.The Process of Transformation in The Life of a Teenager**

According to Gordon Neufeld and Gabor Maté in their 2020 book *Hold On To Your Kids: Why Parents Need To Matter More Than Peers*, “The key to activating maturation is to take care of the attachment needs of the child. To foster independence, we must first invite dependence; ... We liberate children not by making them work for our love but by letting them rest in it.” (Maté & Neufeld, 2004, p. 77) . Thus, the comfort found in a parent’s unconditional embrace, without expectations or conditions, is fundamental. As growth unfolds, processes of removal and renewal occur simultaneously. The teenage brain resembles the storage space of a smartphone: to make room for newer and more useful applications, older ones must be deleted. Likewise, a teenager replaces former interests with new ones that feel more meaningful. He begins to seek friendships outside his family circle and often sees peers as role models rather than his parents, who once represented unquestioned truth.

This transformation occurs as the brain adapts to its social environment, enabling the formation of an independent identity capable of facing societal challenges. For immigrant teenagers in Western contexts, identity development is often complicated by cultural conflict, where exposure to new values outside the home clashes with traditional practices enforced by their parents. The teenager is therefore caught between competing truths and loyalties.

In the Iraqi context, teenagers grow up surrounded by uncertainty about the future: doubts about employment, limited freedom of expression, religious restrictions, and unequal legal protections. These realities shape a generation searching for stability, dignity, and a secure space to express their emerging identities.

Consequently, the reconstruction of the brain of the teenager is identified by neuroscientists as *Synaptic Pruning*. According to biology from Cornell University, Jacquelyn Cafasso, *Synaptic Pruning* is a natural process that occurs in the brain between early childhood



and adulthood. During *Synaptic Pruning*, the brain eliminates extra synapses. Synapses are brain structures that allow the neurons to transmit an electrical or chemical signal to another neuron "(Cafasso, 2018). According to Dean Burnett, during adolescence, the human brain develops around one trillion nerve connections that link brain cells together. The brain then strengthens these connections by wrapping them with *Myelin Sheaths*, fatty insulating layers that help signals travel faster. Through this process, priorities are rearranged, making the individual more responsive to the demands of a growing society. Thus, the society of the toy room is different from that of the school, and the brain must adapt accordingly (Burnett, 2016). This developmental process occurs in the *Prefrontal Cortex*, often referred to as the "CEO of the brain," because it governs planning, self-control, decision-making, and understanding consequences, functions collectively known as *Executive Functions*. However, during adolescence, this brain region is still developing and remains vulnerable to emotional and social pressures. When such pressures increase, the *Amygdala*, often described as the brain's alarm system, becomes more active, triggering feelings of fear, insecurity, and heightened awareness of external threats.

Because the *Prefrontal Cortex* is still maturing while the *Amygdala* remains fully sensitive, teenagers tend to react impulsively and experience frequent mood fluctuations. To compensate for this emotional instability, the brain releases *Dopamine*, which generates feelings of reward, pleasure, and excitement. At times of fear, uncertainty, or social stress, *Dopamine* acts like a *Psychological Filler*, much like plaster used to repair cracks in a deteriorating wall, helping the adolescent cope with internal instability.

However, when *Dopamine* increases excessively, a teenager may exhibit unusual or inconsistent behaviors, driven by curiosity, risk-taking, and desire for novelty rather than thoughtful decision-making. During this stage, adolescents often strive to affirm their identity through appearance, behavior, achievements, or social approval.

For Iraqi teenagers, such development occurs in a restricted environment where opportunities for free choice are limited. Instead of exploring values that suit their emerging identity, they are frequently compelled to conform to inherited traditions, collective expectations, and rigid social norms, even when they conflict with their personal beliefs. As a result, identity building becomes a process of adjustment rather than genuine selection, shaped more by external enforcement than by authentic personal growth.

Accordingly, there is little opportunity for adolescents to innovate or express creativity when they lack the freedom to choose their interests or pursue activities that reflect their

personal growth. The Iraqi teenager, male or female, is often compelled to behave according to expectations imposed by religious or political authorities who hold influence through power structures and armed presence outside the control of the state. As a result, many Iraqi adolescents entering the productive stage of their lives seek employment within government institutions rather than the private sector. The danger becomes evident when state institutions are dominated by extremist religious figures (al-Wala'iyeen) or by political party leaders who possess militias. In such environments, impressionable young individuals, lacking proper guidance and structure, may easily find themselves enlisted within these distorted systems, without the discipline or awareness required to resist exploitation.

Likewise, in modern adolescence, "controlled and directed" curiosity and risk-taking allow teenagers to choose the most beneficial activities. The surrounding environment plays a crucial role in shaping whether their risks become destructive or transform into creative and constructive achievements. On the other hand, in the absence of control, guidance, and proper attention toward the teenager, the adolescent is compelled to search for other sources of pleasure to balance the effects of *Dopamine*. The darker side of *Dopamine* is that it drives adaptation and imitation of the surrounding environment, whether from friends, influencers, or the broader social media, which soon becomes the new benchmark for everything. Caught between acceptance and rejection, the teenager strives to prove himself and be seen as the best. The desire to be the best damages the relationship between the leader (father or teacher) and the teenager. Thus, the teacher, as a director, loses his advantage with the absence of state law over the presence of tribal law; the teenagers seek to adopt the notion of those in power rather than moral authority.

According to a 2003 study from the University of California by researcher Naomi Eisenberger, *Does rejection hurt? An fMRI study of social exclusion*, the feeling of social rejection activates the same brain regions that are stimulated during physical pain, particularly in the anterior *Cingulate Cortex*. As a result, the teenager may become willing to do anything to avoid rejection or peer pressure, even at the expense of his own safety, sometimes leading to extreme behaviors. The economic difficulties, the psychological dilemmas of the parents and teachers, lead Iraqi teenagers to view advantageous to gain loose weapons and be a part of armed militias or to adopt false trends as a source of power. Instead of acquiring knowledge and ideals, the goal becomes money and power, to be the best at the expense of family and childhood.

Thus, gaining admiration or worthiness means being fashionistas, bloggers, gangsters, or extremists. Because the collective mind of Iraqi society that developed under a policy of fear of dictatorship became accustomed to being trained in blind obedience. The adolescent prioritizes gaining as much admiration as possible at the expense of their physical, mental, and psychological well-being. Regardless of the guidance or means, the addiction to excellence becomes a prominent feature of the young person's life, making them isolated, unproductive, and easily influenced. In this sense, according to Noam Chomsky described "The engineering or manufacturing of addiction is the essence of democracy, because you have to make sure that ignorant and intrusive outsiders - that is, us, the people - do not interfere with the work of the serious people who run public affairs for the benefit of the distinguished"(Chomsky, 1998). The new trend of Iraqi teenager in 2025 is to be parts of distinguished people, the corrupt politicians, militia leaders or be self-pornography , those characters become represent the notion of the "*Archetype Wise Man*" (Carl Jung ) in Iraq society.

## **5. THE WAY OF SAVING IRAQ , ADOPTING THE ISS EXPERIENCES**

### **5.1.Schools as a safty place**

According to Noam Chomsky in *The Responsibility of Intellectuals* 1976 “ It is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and to expose lies” . This is the first gap between the student in the Middle East and ideological governments. Actually , Amidst chaos and societal fragmentation, schools must emerge as contemporary beacons, serving not merely as educational institutions but as vital spaces for stability and protection. Efforts to establish specialized schools should begin in remote areas and displacement zone such as *Haur Al-Hammar* , *Haur al-Jubayish* , *Haur al-Hawiza* , which represent the Southern Marshes in Iraq , In addition to *Tal Afar District* , *Nineveh Governorate*, *Mandaliand Khanaqqin* district and others . Following the International Social Service (ISS) approach of safeguarding refugees from returning to unsafe areas, the family in Iraq must be recognized as a critical environment, while schools should function as protective spaces for children, treating them as refugees within their own communities.

In his brailiant study *School as a Microcosm of Society* by Pooja Vishnoi in 2021 , the researcher illusterated the important of school ‘Theoretically, Plato asked us to imagine men living in a cave where they have been chained and cannot move. They cannot turn their heads around, only seeing what is in front of them. The chained prisoners can only look forward against the wall at the end of the cave and can see neither each other. When they see a shadow and hear a voice echo, they assume that the sound is coming from the shadow’”(Vishnoi,p 4,2021). Thus, in a simplistic family, outdated methods of dialogue, communication, language,

and traditions are passed down. This wall of darkness must be broken, and the family must emerge from this dark cave filled with low self-esteem and depression, where insults and beatings are used as means of teaching discipline and gaining obedience and respect. Thus, the distance of a child from the blindness of antiquity to the light of modernity, discipline, and morality in a safe place of school will support and force his personality as an independent human. Furthermore, the limited space of a tent or small apartment differs from the spaciousness of a school and its playground, which provides ample room for physical activity. Therefore, hyperactivity is often observed in children at school who spend most of their time in confined spaces that do not allow them to release their energy for interaction and activity.

### **5.2. Time as a Way of Alination**

According to Noam Chomsky, in a 2015 book, he focused on the relationship between discipline and education. Disciplined education is linked to a unifying vision and discourse, moving away from imaginative ideas associated with delusional discourse. This is achieved through consistency and habituation to a disciplined pattern. In this context, Noam Chomsky says, “necessary illusions ... must be instilled in the public mind by more subtle means. ... [T]here is always the danger that independent thought might translate into political action, so it is important to eliminate the threat at its root” . Gatekeepers serve an important societal purpose for eliminating threats at the root level by inculcating the populace, through education, politics, and mass media to not extend beyond “the bounds of the expressible.” That is, the “spectrum of opinion allowed expression ... bounded by the consensus of powerful elites while encouraging tactical debate within it” (Chomsky, 1989, p. 59). The root represents the most critical stage in the incubation period because it connects the seed to the emerging plant linking the one responsible for germination, watering, and nourishment to the young child. During the first two years, what the child consistently sees is the face and presence of the teacher or the Gatekeeper; thus, the teacher they eventually become is shaped and molded in this period. Across these two years, values such as discipline, respect, idealism, ethics, and courage are instilled in the teacher. At the same time, the immigrant child in the classroom needs to acquire tolerance and openness rather than extremism, respect rather than disorder, and knowledge rather than decline. Thus, approach and style of teaching progression should not be formulaic or imported, but rather stem from the same environment. The appearance and style should not be drastically different, aiming to refute everything the child has seen and heard in the displacement tent. Instead, the method of instilling corrective ideas should be gradual.

On the other hands, the act of vision is deeply connected to child’s memory. In primitive times, early humans observed predators and attempted to imitate them, whether by wearing

their skins or mimicking their sounds. This imitation, rooted in behavior, persisted only as long as the visual experience endured; once the vision faded, so did the mimicry. Similarly, in modern contexts, the child's gaze toward the teacher as a model represents a formative moment capable of reshaping behavior. Conversely, prolonged exposure to shouting, suppression, crying, and physical punishment cultivates aggression within the child.

In Iraqi society, scenes of bloodshed, martyrdom, funerals, and religious commemorations have become normalized, woven into the fabric of everyday life. When school begins at seven in the morning and ends at seven in the evening, leaving only two brief hours for family interaction, the child's perspective becomes oriented toward the order, idealism, and discipline embodied by the school environment. This underscores the importance of distancing the student from disruptive or traumatic surroundings, thereby enabling a reconstruction of ideals, morals, and disciplined behavior within the school context.

Teaching time is closely linked to the duration required for a student to absorb and internalize learning material. This process depends on several interconnected factors: presentation time, comprehension time, and mastery time, the stage at which knowledge is fully retained and functional. These temporal phases are influenced by perseverance, motivation, instructional quality, and individual differences in cognitive processing. Students from rural areas, refugee camps, impoverished neighborhoods, and urban outskirts often face psychological distress, social deprivation, and material hardship, all of which can compromise their ability to focus and persist in learning. Maintaining engagement and perseverance, therefore, requires age-appropriate motivational strategies and incentives. For example, offering luxury chocolates for completing lesson tasks can enhance engagement, broaden participation, and improve learning outcomes. Depending on age, rewards may also include recreational activities, such as time in an arcade, basketball or football practice, or interactive learning methods involving puzzles or applied experiments.

However, educators must recognize that despite individual variations, the efficiency of achieving learning outcomes in the shortest possible time is the key determinant of instructional success. In general, under optimal conditions, the average student's focused listening span rarely exceeds ten minutes. "Time spent was believed to be influenced by the opportunity students had to learn, the motivation students had to persevere for sufficient amounts of time, and the students' aptitude for a specified task. Time needed, on the other hand, was thought to be influenced by students' abilities to understand instruction, the quality of the instruction received by the students, and, once again, the students' aptitudes".( Anderson, 1984,p . 2 ).

Therefore, using brainstorming, focusing on key results, reducing concentration times, and turning study time into enjoyable time are the best ways to improve students' abilities. Finally according to Noam Chomsky in *The Purpose of Education* ‘‘Teaching ought to be, uh, inspiring students to discover on their own, uh, to challenge if they don't agree, to look for alternatives if they think there are better ones, to work through the great achievements of the past and try to master them on their own because they're interested in them. If that's the way teaching is done, students will really gain from it and will not only remember what they studied but will be able to use it as a basis for going on on their own. And again, education is really aimed at just, uh, helping students get to the point where they can learn on their own, 'cause that's what you're going to do for your life , not **just absorb material given to you from the outside and repeat it.**’’( Chomsky, 2012).

This process leads to a kind of unproductive standardization of education. Many schools and universities lack innovation and creativity; they merely produce ignorant graduates and disguised unemployment that burdens the state budget. All of this stems from the absence of fundamental questions about the reasons and objectives behind teaching specific academic disciplines without planning or financial returns.

### 5.3. Special manner to Reconstruct the Behaviour

It is important to recognize the backgrounds of these children, many of whom come from camps such as Al-Hawl or refugee settlements in northern Iraq. They carry with them deeply ingrained negative beliefs and customs concerning life and religion. To transform these ideas within the process of reclaiming barren lands, where poverty and degradation are manifestations of this barrenness, the most effective approach is not to reject their inherited beliefs directly or harshly. Instead, it is essential to dismantle their intellectual constraints through the introduction of opposing yet familiar perspectives. By employing similar notions drawn from their own cultural and religious context, one can gradually replace old ideas with new, constructive ones.

Drawing upon Ferdinand de Saussure's concepts of *Signifier* and *Signified*, there lies a possibility to deconstruct extremist ideologies through peaceful reinterpretations. For example, the *Surah of Al-Tawbah* in the Holy Qur'an, often misinterpreted in some traditional exegeses as associated with violence, can be reexamined through its linguistic, symbolic, and historical contexts. By situating such texts within their original occasions of revelation, detached from modern political realities, it becomes possible to neutralize harmful interpretations and redirect meaning toward reconciliation and peace. Therefore, teachers should be appointed from the



same social environment to be familiar with the needs and inspirations of these innocent children.

The building of new identity, therefore, requires greater struggle, as the adolescent searches for personal space within new society. Erik Erikson described this stage as the conflict between identity and role confusion. To resolve it, the teenager may adopt different “masks,” shaping himself into either a good or a bad person, depending on what will secure acceptance and a sense of belonging. Yet, the flexibility and ambition to explore new experiences represent the most constructive and promising dimensions of adolescence.

## **6. THE POSSIBILITY TO BUILD A HEALTHY AND PEACEFUL SOCIETY WITHIN A SOCIETY SUFFERING FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS.**

First of all, it is important to mention that, "The Republic of Iraq, with technical support from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), held a meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Friday, August 26, 2025, to address human rights violations in Al-Holl camp and other detention centers. During the meeting, it was acknowledged that approximately 18,800 individuals of Iraqi origin are family members of ISIS affiliates."(2025, August 27).

In addition to this reality, there are more than 800 thousand of refugees inside Iraq, all of whom have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and they cannot support their families. “Committee member Sharif Suleiman told Al-Alam Al-Jadeed that his committee is monitoring the displaced people inside and outside the camps, calling for the number of displaced people outside the camps to be greater than the number of those living inside them, as the total number of displaced people registered is between 800,000 and one million across the country, a group of residents in the camps of the region”(Al-Alam, May 19, 2024 ).

Just like the mission of the International Social Service (ISS) “Strives to find solutions that enhance the protection of children in vulnerable situations. Our key priorities are to protect the best interests of the child above all other considerations and provide socio-legal counsel and psychological support. Advocacy, policy development, research, training, and capacity building are among our main focus areas.”(2025).

Thus, if children are regarded as the primary foundation for rebuilding society, then the problems of the future can be addressed, and the recurring tragedies in Iraq can finally be interrupted. The stereotypes of bloodshed, poverty, and deprivation must end through the efforts of those who possess authority and financial capacity to transform the prevailing reality

of injustice. Considering Iraq's material resources, there are genuine opportunities to establish educational institutions designed specifically as School-like temporal residential campuses for displaced children", a term derived from the nature of services provided by such institutions, which refers to educational facilities in which children are accommodated within the school environment for extended periods, often exceeding twelve hours per day. Such institutions would rescue them from harmful environments, support the development of their identities, and shield them from extremist or regressive ideologies inherited from parents who themselves have suffered for years under war, cruelty, and deprivation.

In this regard, the school may serve as an alternative home and an ideal miniature society, fully isolated from destructive surrounding influences. It is possible to rely on socially responsible and affluent individuals to contribute to the establishment of such institutions in order to cultivate an ideal generation (Zakat funds, charitable donations, and voluntary salary deductions may be utilized, given that 2,000 contributors donating USD 250 each would be sufficient to cover the essential construction costs). The estimated cost of constructing a model educational campus is approximately 650 million Iraqi dinars, equivalent to about 500,000 USD. This estimate is supported by the experience of an Iraqi police officer, Saif Abbas Katouf, who successfully built a school on a 2,500-square-meter plot at the aforementioned cost, based on community donations from neighboring residents (Al-Hamdani, 2025). His initiative demonstrates that transforming a marginalized community into a thriving one is first and foremost a humanitarian and socially cooperative effort, rather than a profit-oriented project.

Through inclusive support programs, such as nutritional assistance, recreational facilities, playgrounds, and educational enrichment, such institutions can evolve into exemplary environments where children experience safety, structure, and emotional belonging. In these spaces, beautiful physical settings, compassionate supervision, and supportive relationships can help children gradually overcome the psychological scars of displacement and the harsh memories of life within camps.

Finally, government support should include exemption from licensing and approval fees, and full and effective subsidies for water and electricity bills. The private sector should provide the necessary capital to construct and equip the school according to safety standards, including classrooms, laboratories, playgrounds, a sports club, a library, furniture, and safety equipment. This project will create employment opportunities for workers selected based on their suitability to the school's objectives.

In contrast, it is important to note that all forms of social decadence stem from a long-

standing policy of social obscurantism that has persisted from 1980 until the present. This policy has concentrated authority in the hands of a dictator subtly supported by colonial powers, resulting in the erosion of civil institutions and the rise of radical thinking. For example, in 2025, the collapse of a school roof in the rural district of Al-Yusfia in southern Iraq led to the death of an innocent child (Zaidan , 2025), a tragedy directly linked to political, financial, and administrative corruption. Such incidents are not confined to Iraq but can also be observed in other regions of the Middle East, where deliberate public negligence continues to obscure and violate the truth.

The truth of the story about what was mentioned above can be summed up in these discussion charts :

### 6.1. The Consequence of Decadence

#### The Cosequence of Cultural Flourishing



The chart illustrates two contrasting socio-cultural trajectories. On the left, the consequence of decadence begins with colonization, which leads to authoritarian governance, social obscurantism, and an overall state of decadence. This cycle produces unproductive generations, reinforcing dependency and societal stagnation.

Conversely, the right side represents the consequence of cultural flourishing, where investment in educational environments, symbolized by school-like campuses, encourages deep-rooted identity formation and land reclamation. This progression leads to flourishing societies capable of producing new, productive generations. Thus, the chart highlights how external domination fosters decline, whereas empowerment through education and cultural rootedness promotes sustainable growth and social progress.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates how fear and dynamic forms of domination have funneled innocent children into protracted psychological incarceration, as enduring traumas continue to shape Iraqi minds and disrupt behavior within educational settings. The problem is rooted in decades of war, internal displacement, deprivation of basic needs, and the chronic absence of adequate healthcare services.

Findings indicate that current educational systems fail to cultivate autonomous, creative, and critically engaged learners; instead, they reinforce dependent and constrained identities. Educational decline in affected regions is directly linked to accumulated psychological burdens. In response, the study proposes the development of school-based micro-communities, temporary protective institutions within deteriorating environments, that provide structured learning, psychosocial recovery, and moral stabilization.

Drawing on child-centered humanitarian practices such as those of the International Social Service (ISS) and on Chomsky's critique of controlled education, the study argues that children must be treated as nascent human beings in need of fertile, protected environments. They should be shielded, where feasible, from political, economic, and social violence as well as from racial and sectarian discrimination, so they can reconstruct identities that support more humane and constructive social futures.

The study calls for further research to design and evaluate such transformative models, with sustained attention to instructional quality, psychological stability, and educators' pedagogical competence. These areas require focused empirical and programmatic inquiry.

In sum, the continuation of present educational policies, characterized by rote learning, passive compliance, and the uncritical importation of models suited to stable democratic societies, risks producing an uncreative, stereotyped, and unproductive social order. That order, in turn, transmits psychological complexes to subsequent generations and perpetuates a cycle of social and educational decline.

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