


RESEARCH ARTICLE	 Orphan Sponsorship for Children of Unknown Parentage in Algeria: A Mechanism for Achieving Their Identity and Citizenship
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Abstract In the context of Algerian legislation, the legal framework for children of unknown parentage presents a complex intersection of humanitarian care, Islamic jurisprudence, and state policy. This study explores the institutional mechanism of kafala (sponsorship) as a legally sanctioned alternative to adoption, focusing on its role in safeguarding the identity and citizenship rights of orphaned children in Algeria. Drawing upon statutory texts, Islamic legal principles, and international human rights standards, the paper evaluates how sponsorship functions within Algerian law to provide care, family integration, and civil registration for abandoned children. The study also addresses administrative challenges, social stigmas, and the legal gaps that hinder full citizenship acquisition for these children. The findings suggest that while kafala aligns with religious norms and provides a protective structure, further legislative and procedural reforms are necessary to guarantee the child's right to a legal identity and equitable social inclusion. This research contributes to the broader discourse on child protection, identity formation, and legal belonging in North African legal systems.	
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Introduction:

Contemporary legislations differ in how they care for orphans in general and for orphans of unknown parentage in particular. Two main methods dominate—adoption and sponsorship (kafala). Sponsorship has become one of the most prominent approaches adopted by many modern legal systems, including Algerian law, especially because, unlike adoption, sponsorship is religiously permissible.

In practice, sponsoring an orphaned child of unknown parentage is a charitable legal contract by which the sponsor undertakes to look after the minor in the same manner that parents care for their own children.

Yet, although sponsorship helps protect the orphan of unknown parentage, such a child often begins, upon reaching the age of majority, to search for their origins. This search raises numerous social issues with legal ramifications for society as a whole—foremost among them questions of identity and citizenship. Many national and international statutes stipulate that the sponsored child must retain key components of identity: nationality, family ties, language, religion, and so forth. These elements can greatly affect the child's social integration, identity, and citizenship.

The issues of identity and citizenship that arise once the sponsored child reaches adulthood are therefore crucial—not only because they concern the child's rights, but also because their impact extends to society at large and engages several branches of law, such as civil-status, family, and nationality legislation.

Accordingly, the central research question can be framed as follows: To what extent can the sponsorship of orphans of unknown parentage affect the sponsored child's social integration, and consequently their identity and citizenship?

The aims of this study are threefold:

- To determine whether the Algerian legal system guarantees the sponsored child's right to preserve identity and citizenship.
- To assess how legislative shortcomings may hinder the balance between protecting the sponsored child and safeguarding that child's identity and citizenship.
- To explore possible legal solutions that would close existing gaps and ensure the child's concurrent rights to care, protection, identity, and citizenship.

Answering the research question and achieving these objectives require structuring the paper around the following axes:

1. The study's conceptual framework.
2. The identity question for the sponsored child of unknown parentage.
3. The citizenship question for the sponsored child of unknown parentage.
4. An evaluation of Algerian legislation on sponsoring orphans of unknown parentage.
5. Proposed solutions for balancing the sponsored child's protection with the preservation of identity and citizenship.

These axes will be elaborated in the sections that follow.

First: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Studying the sponsorship of orphans of unknown parentage and examining the issues of their identity and citizenship first requires clarifying two concepts: the orphan of unknown parentage and the sponsorship of such a child. Consequently, this section is divided into the following two points.

01 – Definition of the Orphan of Unknown Parentage

In Arabic, the root word for orphanhood (yutīm) conveys isolation, neglect, anxiety, weakness, and need. This same word is applied to the child of unknown parentage because that child's circumstances resemble those of an orphan (Al-Wanas Hussein, 2016, p. 456).

Accordingly, this point discusses: (1) defining the orphan of unknown parentage, (2) distinguishing that child from similar categories, and (3) explaining the child's need for family care.

A – Defining the Orphan of Unknown Parentage

A child of unknown parentage is someone whose father, mother, or both parents are unknown—whether the child was born within a lawful marriage or an illicit relationship (Souli, 2015, p. 257). Another definition describes such a child as one born to unidentified parents, or as an illegitimate child whose mother is usually known while the father is not (Nasif, 2002, p. 13).

By contrast, an orphan is a child whose parents have died; that status remains until the child comes of age (Rosa Smart, 2003, p. 3). Once adulthood is reached, the label no longer applies (Kamel, 2013, p. 5). The causes of orphanhood vary—from war and natural disaster to sexual abuse inside or outside the family (Souli, p. 13).

A child of unknown parentage therefore grows up without parental affection in a natural family and is, in that sense, an orphan deprived of family care (Al-Arabi, 2012–2016, p. 24). To distinguish this group from orphans whose lineage is known, and from unknown-parentage persons who have already reached adulthood, this study consistently uses the term “orphan of unknown parentage.”

When the two definitions— “unknown parentage” and “orphan”—are combined, the phrase “orphan of unknown parentage” denotes a person who is still legally a child under national law and who does not know one or both parents, regardless of why that ancestry is unknown or whether the birth resulted from marriage or an illicit relationship.

B – Distinguishing the Orphan of Unknown Parentage from Similar Categories

The orphan of unknown parentage, as defined above, belongs to a category that differs from certain related groups and therefore must be set apart from them:

- The orphan. Traditionally, “orphan” refers to a minor whose parents have died. Sub-categories include (Report, 2017, p. 10):

- a child or youth who has lost one or both parents;
- a child or youth whose divorced parents have remarried and no longer intend to raise the child;
- a child or youth with no legal lineage who knows neither parent, or who knows only the mother but not the father.

Hence both the orphan and the orphan of unknown parentage fall under the broader label of minors, yet “orphan” embraces several sub-types, only one of which is the child of unknown parentage.

- The foundling (al-laṭīf). A foundling is a child who is abandoned and discovered by someone; the child is left without any known father or mother, often to avoid a charge of adultery or out of fear of poverty (Souli, p. 260). By definition, the foundling is missing one or both parents (Al-Arabi, p. 23). The Arabic term derives from the verb “to pick up,” describing a baby left outside a mosque, on a doorstep, in the street, or elsewhere, whether born in or out of wedlock (Dkhinet, 2011–2012, p. 12).

Both the foundling and the orphan of unknown parentage lack information about their parents. However, the orphan of unknown parentage may be in that situation because the parents abandoned the child, or because the parents were separated from the child by a natural disaster. Thus, the foundling represents one sub-group within the broader category of unknown-parentage children: some are deliberately abandoned, while others are genuine orphans whose parents were lost under extraordinary circumstances.

C – The Orphan of Unknown Parentage and the Need for Family Care

A ruling by the Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and Fatwa in Saudi Arabia states that children of unknown parentage are in the same legal position as orphans—indeed, they are in still greater need of care, because they lack any known relatives who might help in an emergency (Al-Wanas Hussein, p. 456).

All children need family care: the family is the first place a child learns life's basic rules. An ordinary orphan may find refuge with extended relatives, but an orphan of unknown parentage has no identifiable kin. That child therefore requires substitute family care, delivered in accordance with each society's legal system and religious norms—principally through adoption or sponsorship.

02 – Concept of Sponsoring the Orphan of Unknown Parentage

The family is the most important and oldest institution of socialization; it plays a decisive role in shaping a child's national identity, and the culture that forms a child's sense of identity and nationality springs first and foremost from the family itself (Al-Yafii, 2018, p. 258). When a child is deprived of this natural environment, an alternative family setting must be found to compensate for the lost household—whether through foster care, children's homes, adoption, or sponsorship (Al-Arabi, p. 156).

Because the orphan of unknown parentage has no natural, “original” family formed by his or her biological parents, the child may instead have a “non-original” or substitute family—generally called the sponsoring (or foster) family.

Accordingly, this point addresses the definition of sponsoring an orphan of unknown parentage, its importance, and its distinction from related systems, as follows.

A – Definition of Sponsoring an Orphan of Unknown Parentage

Sponsorship is built on the idea that a family takes an orphan—or anyone in a comparable position—into its home to live as one of its children, receiving all the satisfactions a child needs (psychological, social, material, etc.) so that balanced psychological adjustment can be achieved (Dkhinet, p. 15).

In practice, the meaning of sponsorship varies greatly from one country to another. It can range from anonymous financial support for a child of unknown parentage in institutional care, to an arrangement closely resembling adoption. It also spans short-term care—planned for only a few days or months (Cantwell et al., 2012, pp. 33-34)—to open-ended placement in a substitute family. The prevailing concept of sponsorship, however, goes beyond mere financial aid or temporary care.

Thus, sponsorship of an orphan of unknown parentage has been defined as assuming full responsibility for the child and acting in the child's best interests through a voluntary commitment to raise and protect him or her, formalized by a legal contract that ends automatically when the child reaches the age of majority or by court decision (Al-Wanas Hussein, pp. 445-446). It is therefore one form of caring for and rearing orphans of unknown parentage (Dkhinet, p. 14), whereby the foster or sponsoring family replaces the natural parents to provide a suitable home environment that compensates for the loss of the real family (Abish, 2017, p. 5).

From this perspective, sponsoring an orphan of unknown parentage is a social-legal-religious system based on caring for a child whose parents are unknown until the child comes of age. It furnishes a family environment that permits normal growth and social balance by safeguarding, protecting, and supplying the child's essential needs—just as happens for

children raised in their natural families—while respecting the legal, religious, and social norms in force in the sponsor's society.

B – Importance of Sponsorship for the Orphan of Unknown Parentage

Adopting a sponsorship system for orphans of unknown parentage means providing a family setting for a child who, by circumstance, could not grow up in a natural household (Al-Arabi, p. 156). Sponsorship therefore satisfies the child's need to live within a family, where essential human requirements can be met, social values and customs acquired, and deficiencies in personality development—inevitable in group residential care—can be remedied (Dkhinet, p. 53).

Hence, the importance of sponsoring orphans of unknown parentage lies in supplying substitute family care to children unable to live with a natural family, enabling them to enjoy family-like conditions comparable to those of children with known parentage. This, in turn, fosters balanced development, social integration, and the realization of both identity and citizenship.

C – Distinction Between Sponsorship and Comparable Systems

Sponsoring an orphan of unknown parentage differs from adopting one: the sponsored child is not legally affiliated to the sponsor, is not described as the sponsor's son or daughter, and there is no mutual inheritance between sponsor and child. Religiously, when the child reaches puberty, the sponsor does not become a mahram for the sponsor's adult female relatives (Abu Muslim, 2020).

Sponsorship is thus an alternative-care arrangement for orphans of unknown parentage, whereas adoption creates a full legal relationship between child and adopting family (Cantwell, p. 33), affiliating the child to that family's lineage and granting all rights that follow from bearing its name—so the child becomes, in effect, one of its biological members.

In short, both sponsorship and adoption are systems for caring for orphans of unknown parentage, but sponsorship amounts to foster care: it provides a substitute family and full attention to the child's needs as if the child were one of the family's own, yet without conferring the family surname or the inheritance and other rights reserved for natural children. Adoption includes everything provided by sponsorship and adds legal affiliation to the adoptive family's lineage.

Second: The Problematic of Investigating Identity in the Sponsored Child of Unknown Parentage

The orphan of unknown parentage is a human being like any other and therefore enjoys, as everyone else does, the right to an identity. Yet the notion of identity we invoke for the child of unknown parentage differs from other uses of the term. We shall begin by clarifying the concept of identity as it applies to such a child, and then move to the substance of that identity. This section is accordingly divided into two points.

01 – Clarifying the Concept of Identity for the Orphan of Unknown Parentage

The term identity refers to the meaningful ordering of relationships among individuals and groups—and among those individuals and groups in their similarities and differences (Report, p. 36). It is also a term that signifies existence itself (Meskini, 2007–2008, p. 7), for identity is the tool used to distinguish one person from another (Al-Arabi, p. 9).

The form of identity addressed in this study gives rise to a developmental crisis triggered by physiological changes and social expectations. It is not a crisis in the sense of an immediate threat, but rather a decisive stage that must be passed to avoid diffusion and alienation (El-Jazzar, 2011, p. 16). The identity under discussion therefore differs from political or constitutional identity; here it concerns the orphan's inner self and is at once a social, psychological, and legal concept.

Accordingly:

- In its social sense, the identity of an orphan of unknown parentage refers to the child's belonging to the community. Living within a human society marked by traits that vary from one person to another, the child is required to move

within an historical group and to fulfil a certain measure of social solidarity (Meskini, p. 82). Identity thus draws upon a theoretical framework that displays individual distinctiveness (Report, p. 37).

- In its psychological sense, identity refers to the feeling of belonging the child experiences and to the origin of the child's existence within that society; it signifies we ourselves as participants in the human whole (Meskini, p. 82).
- In its legal sense, identity comprises the child's rights to the elements that the law defines as identity, by which persons can be identified and differentiated. In this sense, it is the most fundamental of the orphan's rights.

02 – The Substance of the Identity Problem for the Orphan of Unknown Parentage

At the outset it must be noted that identity does not raise legal problems for the sponsored orphan of unknown parentage; most issues concern social, psychological, and religious facets, as explained below.

A – The Social Dimension of the Identity Problem

Safeguarding the orphan's right to identity constitutes the essential point of departure that enables the exercise of all other rights and allows normal growth within society (Ashu, 2013, p. 68). Despite this protection, the orphan of unknown parentage often suffers from an unclear personal identity—on which self-esteem depends—leading to confusion and anxiety that frequently end in emotional instability and social maladjustment (Abish, p. 11).

Some trace these social-identity difficulties to the fact that, in many sponsoring families, the orphan is excluded by the family's biological children, who see the newcomer as a rival for parental love and care. The child begins to feel sidelined and thus embarks on a quest for identity, especially on discovering that his or her surname differs from those of the other children in the household (Kamel, p. 9).

B – The Psychological Dimension of the Identity Problem

The sponsored orphan of unknown parentage experiences an identity crisis and a loss of trust in self and in the non-biological parents after learning that he or she is not the couple's natural child (Lkogi, 2015–2016, p. 9). Psychologically, the identity problem may produce one of three negative patterns:

- Diffused identity: the orphan who has undergone no identity crisis and has not yet formed an identity—this appears especially in adolescence.
- Foreclosed identity: the orphan who has faced an identity crisis but has adopted beliefs acquired from others without examination or critique, closing off further exploration.
- Moratorium identity: the orphan who is currently in crisis and has not yet formed an identity, remaining in search of one (Lkogi, pp. 86–89).

When the sponsored orphan reaches sufficient awareness and starts to think about the future, attention turns to the origin of birth, family background, and the reasons for abandonment. Lacking answers, the child feels bereft of an identity from which to derive self-worth: Where did I come from? Where is my family? How was I lost? Is my name even real? Countless questions arise: Where are my relatives? What is my family name? How did I disappear? (Dkhinet, p. 52).

C – The Religious Dimension of the Identity Problem

Protecting the religious identity of the sponsored orphan entails more than safeguarding the child's right to religious and spiritual participation; it also prohibits any attempt to alter the child's faith or beliefs. The principal objective of providing alternative care must never be to advance the caregivers' religious aims (Cantwell, p. 85).

Third: The problematic of achieving citizenship for the sponsored child of unknown parentage

The mere fact that an orphan's lineage is unknown does not strip that child of citizenship. Nonetheless, some people mistakenly regard an orphan's enjoyment of citizenship as an act of society's tolerance. One illustration is the 2011 study by 'Abd al-Fattāh 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Hams and Ziyād 'Alī al-Jarjāwī, "The Degree of Acceptance of Foundlings in Palestinian Society: A Comparative Psychological Study," which states: "...accepting the foundling as a citizen in Palestinian society is considered acceptable ... this shows that the Palestinian individual is very tolerant and does not deny the foundling citizenship ..." (Lqouqī, p. 32). In fact, the citizenship enjoyed by the orphan of unknown parentage in general—and by the sponsored orphan in particular—is not a concession from any person or any society; it is an inherent human right, not a favour granted out of tolerance.

Accordingly, this section first clarifies the concept of citizenship as it concerns the orphan of unknown parentage, and then addresses its substance, in the following two points:

A - Delineating the concept of citizenship for the orphan of unknown parentage

Citizenship is a political value, for it embodies the relationship between citizens and the state by means of the bond that unites them. Yet its linkage to political values does not make citizenship a static concept derived solely from constitutional-legal discourse; rather, it is a dynamic notion that varies with differing contexts (Al-Yafī'ī, p. 253). Citizenship is the political expression of the social-human cohesion shared by partners in one homeland.

Citizenship reflects the status and social relationship that exist between the natural person (the individual) and the political community (the state): the first party offers loyalty, while the second undertakes protection. The manner in which this relationship is defined is regulated by law (Al-'Amārī, 2014, p. 34).

When we speak of the citizenship of the sponsored orphan of unknown parentage, we must begin with the family as the setting in which citizenship is created—the family here being the sponsoring family. Thus, family and citizenship are linked; citizenship is realised through the family, not only through familiar legal and political institutions. Within the family the individual is trained to become a citizen (Al-Yafī'ī, pp. 248–251), belonging to a homeland to which loyalty is given and interacting positively with fellow citizens (Al-'Amārī, p. 36).

B - The substance of achieving citizenship for the orphan of unknown parentage

Being a full citizen grants a person the right to acquire the nationality of a given state and to reside there permanently. This creates legal, political, and social effects between individual and state—effects that, as noted above, establish reciprocal rights and obligations (Ashu, p. 68).

Accordingly, the substance of achieving citizenship for the sponsored orphan of unknown parentage can be realised by building a culture of citizenship within the child, a culture formed through:

Preserving each society's distinctive identity in the face of threats.

Instilling in the child the concepts, knowledge, and values related to the homeland, for embedding them during childhood and raising the child upon them makes these values a constitutive element in shaping the child's personality (Lakhal, 2017, p. 14).

Fourth: Assessment of the Algerian Legal System in Securing the Identity and Citizenship of Sponsored Children of Unknown Parentage:

Comparative legislation has addressed the sponsorship of orphans of unknown parentage and the safeguarding of their identity and citizenship in various ways that suit each society's social and religious order; following the same approach, the Algerian legislator has likewise regulated the sponsorship of such orphans and guaranteed their identity and citizenship.

Accordingly, this section evaluates the Algerian experience first in organising the sponsorship of orphans of unknown parentage and then in regulating those orphans' identity and citizenship, by dividing the discussion into the following two points:

01 - Evaluating the Algerian legal system for organising the sponsorship of orphans of unknown parentage:

The Algerian legislator—under Articles 114 et seq. of Family Law 54/11—permits sponsorship, treating it as a charitable act whereby the sponsor covers the orphan's maintenance, care, and upbringing; by the same statute, adoption is forbidden.

At this juncture several observations can be made, the most important of which are:

The Algerian legislator views sponsorship as a gratuitous contract, since it rests on the sponsor's voluntary provision for the orphan's needs—maintenance, care, education, and so forth. Being a contract, sponsorship must be concluded either in a notarised deed or by judicial order (Al-'Arabi, p. 160); hence it cannot be effected merely by a private decision of the sponsor or by informal consent from the institution housing the child—formal agreement by both parties or a court ruling is indispensable.

The legislator requires the consent of the child's parents (Art. 117, Family Code); yet an orphan of unknown parentage, by definition, has no known parents. Thus the statute does not address this circumstance or identify which body should give approval for placing the child in sponsorship.

The law obliges anyone who finds a newborn to report the discovery to the civil registrar of the locality where the infant was found; if the finder does not wish to sponsor the baby, the child must be handed over to the registrar together with any items found with the infant (Art. 67, Civil Status Law 20/70). This means that first priority to sponsor the orphan goes to the finder; if the finder declines, the child must be surrendered with the accompanying belongings. Where the finder does wish to sponsor, the statute draws no distinction by sex, marital status, or financial capacity, and so forth.

02 - Evaluating the Algerian legal system for organising the identity and citizenship of the sponsored orphan of unknown parentage:

Identity elements consist of name, nationality, and family ties. Some authors add that these elements are determined: subjectively, by the person's name and political-legal status (nationality) or family status (kinship); and spatially, by the legal domicile in which the person resides (Al-'Arabi, p. 10).

At first glance these appear to concern identity alone, yet in reality they pertain to both identity and citizenship, for the child's right to nationality—the basis for expressing citizenship—represents the legal facet of identity and forms part of civil status, linking the child to a state through a political-legal bond (Walī, 2007-2008, p. 28).

Hence the shared elements of identity and citizenship are: name, kinship, nationality, and domicile—collectively termed by the Algerian legislator “the attributes of the natural person” (Al-'Arabi, p. 10). The regulation of each element is addressed as follows:

Concerning the name and surname of the orphan of unknown parentage: one of the chief questions is whether such a child may be given both a given name and a family name, who bestows them, and what kind of surname may be used (Al-'Arabi, p. 24).

The Algerian legislator, following many comparative systems, provides that the civil registrar personally assigns names to foundlings and to children born to unknown parents when no declarant has supplied names; several given names are allotted, and the last is taken as the child's family name (Art. 67/04, Civil Status Law 20/70). Thus the orphan enjoys, like other children, the right to a name and a surname, though the surname is necessarily fictitious because paternal lineage is missing; it also entitles the child to civil-status documents and other official papers proving identity.

This right must be granted without falsifying the circumstances in which the child was found, which explains why the naming is administrative: no person other than the civil registrar may give the child a name, nor may the child be affiliated to anyone.

After conferring the name, the registrar records all relevant information—date and place of discovery, condition, clothing—to facilitate any future reunion with the true family and to help the biological parents locate the child should their conscience awaken (Al-'Arabi, pp. 25-26).

As for the date of birth, it is fixed according to the child's apparent age at discovery; place of birth is recorded as the municipality where the child was found (Art. 67/03, Civil Status Law 20/70).

This shows that the Algerian legislator has sought to secure both a given name and a surname for the orphan of unknown parentage—two essential personal attributes—while avoiding distortion of the facts by vesting naming authority solely in the civil registrar and by requiring full documentation to assist any eventual search for true lineage. The legislator also adds date and place of birth, completing the official record of the child's notional identity and thus ensuring enjoyment of the right to identity and to the attributes of a natural person.

Concerning kinship: Algerian law contains no provision on kinship for the orphan of unknown parentage, which is unsurprising given the impossibility of establishing lineage; apart from recording place of birth, the child logically cannot possess this personal attribute.

Concerning nationality: a person has no legal personality unless, from birth to death, they belong to a state, an affiliation effected through that state's nationality.

To preserve the citizenship of the orphan—which is achievable only through nationality—the Algerian legislator grants original Algerian nationality to any child born on Algerian soil, whatever the child's origins, by conferring it on every child born nationwide to unknown parents (Arts. 6-8, Nationality Ordinance 86/70).

This rule nurtures the orphan's loyalty to Algeria and promotes integration into its society; it also protects the child from statelessness and upholds a fundamental human right—the right to a nationality (Al-'Arabi, pp. 65-68). Thus the legislator safeguards the orphan's citizenship as well as identity, since nationality is primarily a component of citizenship, not solely of identity.

Concerning citizenship: citizenship is intrinsically tied to the homeland. It follows that citizenship results from nationality, which generates the rights and obligations linking the individual to the state and makes the person a member of the people. Accordingly, holding Algerian nationality entitles the orphan of unknown parentage to another right—legal domicile within Algeria.

Fifth: Proposed solutions for balancing protection of the sponsored child of unknown parentage with the safeguarding of that child's identity and citizenship.

Sponsoring orphans of unknown parentage is one approved form of alternative care for this segment of society; its aim is to provide health, social, and psychological support and to create a suitable home environment that guarantees them a normal life (Ādam al-Shaykh, 2015, pp. 9, 26). Yet sponsorship does not automatically produce sound social integration; the sponsored child often suffers disruptions in both identity and citizenship. This calls for exploring possible remedies so that a sound sponsorship system can overcome the orphan's identity problems and secure full citizenship.

In this regard, the chief possible remedies can be distilled into two basic solutions: ensuring social integration and ensuring proper upbringing and education for the sponsored orphan of unknown parentage. These two solutions are explained below.

01 – Proposed solutions for ensuring the social integration of the sponsored child of unknown parentage:

Making social integration for the sponsored orphan of unknown parentage a top priority in the sponsorship system is the most effective means of realising that child's identity and citizenship. In practice, effectiveness is usually blocked by many factors that undermine sponsorship's role. Effectiveness can be achieved only by improving sponsorship methods so that they truly promote social integration. Details follow.

A – Reasons social integration is difficult for the sponsored child of unknown parentage:

Most obstacles to social integration stem from problems encountered by the child within the foster or sponsoring family. The main problems are as follows:

- Spoiling: when the foster family has long suffered childlessness through infertility, the child may be overindulged and become selfish, demanding, and unable to assume responsibility, which complicates integration—especially after the child learns he is not the family's biological son.
- Over-protection: when the foster mother is neurotic, she becomes excessively cautious and fearful for the child, who grows up dependent and timid and may later rebel during adolescence, becoming aggressive; this hinders proper integration in a society that already finds it hard to accept a child of unknown parentage.
- Neglect: if biological children are later born to the foster parents, emotional warmth toward the sponsored child may cease, leaving him sad and distrustful of himself and others and obstructing proper integration.
- Differential treatment: when the sponsored orphan lives with the foster parents' natural children, he grows up feeling different, wronged, and unsafe, which prevents social integration (Dkhīnat, pp. 55-56).
- Rejection: peer rejection arises when classmates taunt the child as a "foundling," a label that constitutes social stigmatisation of one deemed unacceptable (Abīsh, p. 15); the child becomes filled with anger and aggressive tendencies toward others, making integration personally unacceptable (Dkhīnat, p. 55).
- Exclusion: social marginalisation results from cultural norms that condemn sexual relations outside lawful marriage and therefore reject the orphan's social status (Kāmil, pp. 2-3; Abīsh, p. 15); the child grows distrustful of society and full of resentment, rendering integration extremely difficult.

From these causes it is clear that a capable, concerned foster family can help the orphan achieve social balance and personality integration, whereas a neglectful, unsuitable family leaves the child with severe disturbances that impede healthy growth, proper equilibrium, and social integration (Dkhīnat, p. 56).

B – Methods for achieving social integration of the sponsored child of unknown parentage:

A child— including the sponsored orphan of unknown parentage— is not merely a mouth to feed or a body to shelter, wash, and medicate; he is a social being, a newcomer to a world he does not understand (Jam'ī, 2013, p. 73). Sponsorship therefore demands affection and tenderness: without them, emotional deprivation breeds negative traits— aggression, the incessant search for love, and so forth—leaving the child unable to interact with social patterns because he does not grasp his social role (Dkhīnat, p. 41).

On this basis, researchers have offered several remedies for social integration; the most important are:

- Some start from society's rejection of the sponsored orphan, rooted in the child's unknown lineage, and propose that the public interest override religious opinion by softening legal rules and permitting adoption, which, they claim, better serves the child (Ashu, p. 139). Yet adoption cannot replace sponsorship in a Muslim society, because it contradicts Islamic law.
- Others attribute difficult integration to improper family treatment such as spoiling and propose adequate preparation and training and matching procedures between child and sponsor to increase positive outcomes (Cantwell, p. 91). This is among the best remedies, for uninformed families can then treat the child properly, facilitating integration.

- Still others stress harsh or neglectful foster care and call for broad state intervention to ensure protection within the sponsoring household; because the orphan is a minor lacking physical maturity, the state must provide protection (Jamī, p. 74). They urge legislation to spell out the rights of sponsored orphans and create mechanisms for healthy development in a cohesive society (al-Muṭayrī, 1438 H, p. 276). They also urge civil-society organisations to assist the state by tracking sponsored orphans, monitoring their schools, offering protection and support, and advising foster families (Cantwell, p. 78). If applied, this remedy is effective: the state must play a stronger role in protecting sponsored orphans, while voluntary associations can support both child and family, improving integration.

02 – Proposed solutions for achieving proper upbringing and education of the sponsored child of unknown parentage:

Besides social integration, proper upbringing and education are decisive for sponsorship's success in overcoming identity problems and achieving citizenship. Remedies involve all parties concerned with the child's care, identity, and citizenship:

- Solutions related to the sponsored orphans themselves: older children should be consulted before placement with foster families, and their consent to remain should be confirmed throughout sponsorship, for this increases the likelihood of positive results (Cantwell, p. 27).

This measure, though inapplicable to infants, can be applied later once the child can speak; displeasure with foster treatment may signal sponsorship failure.

- Solutions related to the community where the child lives: a citizenship culture must be built by turning the legal rights of sponsored orphans from abstract norms into everyday behaviour—spreading values of freedom, dignity, equality, tolerance, and ethics at each stage of cognitive, physiological, and psychological growth (Abīsh, p. 18).

Citizenship education is merely a means of enlightening citizens and opening their minds and emotions to the truth that every state member is, in principle, equal in rights and duties and participates at every level (Nāṣif, p. 2). The child's personality is thus shaped by a human-rights culture, embedding national identity and the values of citizenship in all dimensions (al-ʿAmārī, pp. 33-35).

- Solutions related to foster families: these usually involve awareness-raising, for families that sponsor orphans of unknown parentage may lack experience with children. Training can focus on the child's particular care needs so that he can later adapt and integrate, overcoming identity and citizenship problems. Religious as well as social instruction is crucial: firm religious conviction can improve the family's treatment and positively affect the orphan's future social life.

Conclusion:

At the end of this paper, the following findings can be recorded:

- Orphans of unknown parentage form a social group that, in law, enjoys all rights and duties. They are minors who do not know one or both parents. Because they need care, the sponsorship system was created. Sponsorship is a legal, religious, and social scheme distinct from adoption: unlike adoption, it does not attach the child fully to the foster family, does not confer the family surname, and leaves the child without certain rights—inheritance foremost among them.

- The sponsored orphan of unknown parentage usually suffers problems of identity and citizenship. Identity has social, psychological, and religious dimensions; in practice, legal issues rarely arise.

- Citizenship is a right the orphan enjoys equally with all citizens of the state whose territory he inhabits and whose nationality he holds; enjoying citizenship is therefore not a concession but an acquired right.

- Algerian law regulates sponsorship and forbids adoption, because the Family Code—rooted in Islamic law—prohibits adoption and permits sponsorship.

- Algerian legislation also organises the identity and citizenship of the orphan of unknown parentage—whether sponsored or placed in institutional care—by prescribing how to assign a name and surname, determine date and place of birth, and specify the body that confers the name; it grants nationality through territorial birth, thereby making the child a full citizen like those whose nationality derives from blood.
- In practice, sponsored orphans face social-integration difficulties stemming either from the foster family's treatment or from societal norms and behaviours that negatively affect the child's personality.
- Family accompaniment—training and preparation for foster families—is proposed to improve sponsorship outcomes. The state can provide it through its institutions; civil-society organisations can also offer mainly moral support, ensuring integration and overcoming identity and citizenship problems.
- Education for citizenship is likewise a remedy capable of guaranteeing the orphan's integration; it involves the orphans themselves, the foster families, and society as a whole.

This paper concludes that although sponsorship was devised to solve the problems of orphans of unknown parentage by providing a family environment conducive to social integration and resolving identity and citizenship issues outside institutional care, real-world evidence shows that sponsorship has not fully succeeded, given persistent identity, citizenship, and integration difficulties despite legislative efforts to regulate sponsorship and secure the child's personal attributes.

The identity and citizenship problems confronting sponsored orphans are not tied to a single legal system or society; rather, they are a social phenomenon affecting this group in all societies that practise sponsorship, advanced or developing. These problems can be overcome by activating a set of solutions involving the orphans themselves, the foster families, and society at large.

Finally, even though sponsorship results in orphans of unknown parentage who often struggle with integration and identity and citizenship issues, it remains preferable to leaving them in mass residential institutions devoid of a family atmosphere. If surrounded by suitable remedies and equipped with mechanisms to close gaps in the system, sponsorship can become a more effective means of safeguarding the identity and care of this segment of society.

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