

RESEARCH  
ARTICLE**The socio-cultural dimension and the reality of tourism  
polarization in activating tourism in Algerian society****Atika Djaidja**

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**Abstract**

Tourism is considered a fundamental activity in people's lives, as its direct and indirect effects extend to social, cultural, and economic aspects, and even to international relations. Its growing importance is evident in its role in international trade. However, despite the significance of its economic returns, this is not the only criterion that the state relies on to promote and support the tourism industry. This presentation explores Algeria's tourism wealth by highlighting its natural assets and its potential to attract tourists. Algeria is characterized by remarkable natural diversity, stretching from the coastline to the highlands and the Sahara Desert, giving it immense tourism potential. The country boasts breathtaking landscapes, beaches, mountains, and vast deserts, in addition to Roman ruins, fortresses, and theaters in regions such as Batna, Setif, and Cherrhell. Despite possessing these natural, human, and material assets, the tourism sector in Algeria remains weak compared to neighboring countries like Tunisia and Morocco. This is mainly due to the lack of effective political management to develop the sector, rendering it marginal and unable to fulfill its true role. Given the current favorable conditions for development, there is hope that Algeria's tourism sector will witness a genuine revival in the coming years.

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## Introduction:

Tourism has objectives that can be easily recognized. It is the sector most attractive to foreign direct investment and is considered one of the fastest-growing industries in the world. Today, it stands as one of the most important sectors in international trade, being a productive field that plays a major role in increasing national income, improving the balance of payments, providing a source of hard currency, creating employment opportunities, and serving as a tool for achieving economic development programs. Tourism is also significant due to the substantial financial returns it can generate in the medium and long term, as well as its capacity to create wealth and alleviate many economic challenges. Many countries have found in this industry a strategic alternative to exploit their tourism resources in a sustainable way, reducing their reliance on depletable sources of wealth. It is now the leading industry in terms of employment and plays an essential role in both economic and social development.

Tourism was once viewed simply as travel to specific places for rest and relaxation or to perform religious duties, either within one's own country or abroad. However, the rapid and successive developments in the modern international community have led to fundamental changes in the perception and, consequently, the concept of tourism. From this perspective, civilized nations no longer spend their money in other places merely for entertainment or to waste time. Rather, they do so to achieve deeper purposes—such as discovering the truths of the universe and reflecting on the masterpieces created by the Creator, which leave the human being in awe, unable to decipher their mysteries. These purposes also include exploring the cultural treasures accumulated over the years and seeking to understand as much as possible about the various aspects of human societies—such as their art, behavior, thinking, and beliefs.

Algeria possesses immense tourism potential, yet the lack of attention to this sector throughout its development journey has prevented the country from fully benefiting from it or showcasing its treasures both locally and internationally. In addition to the diverse landscapes—ranging from the coastal strip to the interior highlands and the vast Sahara Desert—each region is rich with a variety of tourist attractions. Algeria also boasts a deep-rooted historical heritage that has withstood the passage of time, including caves, tombs, and rock carvings dating back to prehistoric times.

Moreover, Algeria has considerable tourism resources, whether natural, human, or material, even under current conditions. However, the failure to focus on and invest in this sector has rendered it marginal. These potentials were even acknowledged by the colonial authorities at the time, who showed interest and encouraged investment in them. Thus, it is often said that

the tourism sector in Algeria suffers from neglect by those responsible for its development—despite the fact that current circumstances are highly favorable. This is what we hope to see change in the coming years.

Despite the growing importance of the tourism sector in many countries around the world, the reality of tourism in Algeria is not encouraging. The sector has not reached the level necessary to achieve its intended goals, and its accomplishments remain very limited when compared to other countries in general, and to neighboring and sister countries in particular. The volume of investment allocated to this sector is considered weak in relation to the vast size of Algeria. In light of this, the Algerian government is striving to make the Master Plan for Tourism Development the main reference for future tourism policy in the country.

Tourism has held special importance for most peoples of the world since ancient times. However, its significance has greatly increased with the growing role it plays in economic, social, environmental, and technological spheres. Tourism has emerged as the fastest-growing sector in the global economy, and the tourism industry now occupies a prominent position in the economies of nations, becoming the most important global industry.

According to Maslow's theory of human motivation, there are several human needs that determine behavior. These needs are arranged in a hierarchical order, ranked by their importance in fulfillment—from the base of the pyramid to its peak. At the base lie the physiological needs such as food and water, followed by the need for safety and security—like housing and employment. Next is the need to be accepted by a specific social group. Near the top is the need for self-actualization or personal development. Included in this final category is the need for new experiences or the desire for change, driven by the aim of escaping routine, restrictions, or the pressures of daily life. (Al-Houri and Al-Dabbagh, 2001, p. 82)

When looking at neighboring countries, we see that they possess only a fraction of the natural beauty and tourist landmarks that Algeria enjoys. Algeria, with its vast expanse, boasts a coastline stretching over 1,200 kilometers and a desert extending more than 2,000 kilometers, in addition to its stunning natural landscapes. The country holds all the elements of a strong tourism sector—beaches, mountains, and deserts—and is rich in Roman ruins, fortresses, and theaters in regions such as Batna, Setif, and Cherrhell. Yet, tourism in Algeria remains limited compared to neighboring countries like Tunisia and Morocco. Algeria's material, human, and environmental resources qualify it to be a top-tier tourist destination. However, the lack of political management to promote this sector has rendered it marginal and unable to fulfill its true role. This neglect

of the tourism sector has been further reinforced by the rentier nature of the national economy, which depends heavily on hydrocarbons. This dependence was particularly evident over the past ten years, during which oil prices continuously rose to record levels, bringing substantial revenues to the national treasury and placing the country in a state of financial ease. However, with the countdown to oil depletion underway, there is a pressing need to reconsider the country's development policy by seeking alternative sources of revenue to support economic development.

There is a growing belief that Algeria is a "great tourist country with almost no tourists." So why does Algeria seem to be "driving away" its tourists indirectly, despite having once been a popular destination during the French colonial era and even in the early years of independence—thanks to its rich tourism resources?

Does the lack of tourism in Algeria, compared to its vast wealth of attractions, stem from inadequate infrastructure and facilities? Or is it rooted in a harsh mindset that is unwelcoming to tourists and lacks a true culture of tourism?

### 1- Definition of Tourism:

In today's world, tourism is considered an industry—known as the tourism industry—with its own foundations and principles, supported by strategies, studies, and plans aimed at securing a leading position among global economic resources. It is an industry with multiple dimensions and objectives, primarily contributing to national income and the national economy. The development and growth of this industry are greatly influenced by scientific and technological advancements.

Many experts and researchers interested in tourism have defined the term from various perspectives. Some view it as a social phenomenon, others as an economic one, while some emphasize its role in fostering international relations or see it as a factor in promoting human or cultural relations, and so on.

**Definition from the Larousse Dictionary:** Tourism is the process of traveling for the purpose of recreation. (Larousse, 1980) This definition implies that tourism encompasses all the procedures related to organizing and carrying out travel with the goal of personal leisure. In reality, this definition is considered classical and very general because it does not account for the modern concepts of tourism, as its purpose is no longer limited to recreation only, as we will see later.

**Definition by the Swiss Professors Honzikier and Kraft:** These two experts define tourism as: "The sum of relationships and phenomena resulting from the travel and stay of individuals whose place of residence is not their main, permanent home or usual workplace." (Tessa, 1993, p. 21)

This definition is based on three criteria. The first criterion involves movement from one's usual place of residence—that is, traveling to a new place or destination. The second criterion relates to the place of stay or residence, which must not constitute or become a main or permanent residence. The third criterion concerns the motive or purpose of travel or movement, which should not be for paid work.

Tourism is primarily a human economic activity before it becomes a tangible, visible entity. The tourism industry is described as an intangible industry in a tangible world. It is considered a first-class service industry and an art of human recreational interaction—both for those who benefit from its services and for those who provide them. (Al-Ta'i, 2004, p. 1)

**Definition by the International Academy of Tourism:** Tourism is a term used for recreational trips, or as the International Academy of Tourism considers it, the totality of human activities organized to achieve this type of travel. It is an industry that works together to meet the needs of the tourist. (Al-Hamdan, 2001, p. 57).

It is also defined by Sobhi Abdel Hakim and Hamdi Al-Deeb in their book *Geography of Tourism* (1995) as "a mixture of phenomena and relationships arising from the movement and stay of individuals in different places, involving the elements of movement—travel—and permanence—residence. This takes place in an area of attraction, resulting in activities different from those practiced in the sending areas, especially since the temporary movement to these areas is not connected to paid work." (Hijab, 2002, p. 22).

Tourism is primarily an industry. Although nature, since its creation by God, has endowed it with beautiful and magnificent features such as lakes, waterfalls, mountains, and deserts that have attracted human attention and enjoyment of its breathtaking landscapes, the tangible reality indicates that tourism is an industry created by humans. It is based on those natural elements, their development, and the surrounding services and touches needed to fully enjoy them and their views. Thus, tourism, its industry, and its development are human-made. Most tourist sites in today's world involve human activity as modification and creation, reflecting a positive relationship between tourism and the economy. (K. H., 2001, p. 63).

The founder of tourism research, the scholar Hunziker, defines tourism as: "The totality of relationships and phenomena resulting from travel and temporary residence of a person outside their usual place of residence, provided that this temporary residence does not become permanent, and as long as this residence is not linked to an activity that generates profit for this foreigner." (Lanquar, 1993, p. 10).

From all these definitions, the essential characteristics that must be present in the tourism

### Phenomenon can be summarized as follows:

- The phenomenon of tourism involves the migration of individuals either at the national or international level for reasons other than seeking work or looking for a place to live permanently.
- Tourism as an activity is a complex and composite mix consisting of many phenomena and relationships, including economic, social, cultural, civilizational, media-related, and others.
- It is an activity generated by the movement of individuals to areas other than their permanent place of residence, thus containing a dynamic or kinetic element—the journey—and a static element—the temporary stay.
- The activities practiced by the tourist in the destination areas differ from those practiced in their original place of residence.
- The stay is temporary, with a minimum duration of twenty-four hours and a maximum of one year. Activities resulting from stays shorter than twenty-four hours are not considered tourism activities.
- Tourism as an activity is linked to an important element: leisure time and vacations. Without this element, the tourism trip does not occur.
- The purpose of travel or temporary relocation must not be to obtain work.
- The movement of tourists must be conducted through lawful means, with exceptions for those who do otherwise.

a. **Reasons that contributed to the spread, expansion, and growth of the tourism industry:** There are many factors and reasons that have contributed to the spread, expansion, and growth of the tourism industry worldwide, which can be summarized as follows: (Al-Saouri, 2002, pp. 33–37; Abdel Aziz, 2005, p. 34)

- The development of transportation means and methods, especially after World War II, which facilitated travel and movement across continents in short times.
- Enjoyment of paid vacations following the enactment of labor laws and regulations that set mandatory paid leave, particularly in Western countries.
- The advancement and progress of modern communication methods and media, which have greatly contributed to the development of the tourism industry, making it easier for many people to manage their work and affairs in any country in the world through the use of the internet and mobile phones.
- The development of the information revolution in the era of globalization has led to increased cultural and social awareness, as well as the spread and dissemination of information. This has resulted in a growing desire among many people to visit other countries to explore their cultures, civilizations, customs, and traditions.

- The advancement of global infrastructure and the expansion of transportation networks have contributed to the ease of moving from one place to another, both domestically and internationally.

### 2- Types of Tourism Present in Algeria:

The factors that motivate a person or tourist to undertake trips, which may be short or long in duration, vary according to their inclinations and desires. These types may include:

**First: Cultural Tourism:** This type reflects the progress of the country and the cultural and civilizational level of its people. It is manifested by visiting historical landmarks, archaeological sites, and even places of worship of various kinds, whether Islamic or otherwise.

**Second: Recreational Tourism:** This involves relaxing and entertaining oneself, through which an individual achieves feelings of happiness and excitement. In this context, Me Dougall states that tourism adds more happiness and all manifestations of joy (*Al-Munjid fi al-Lugha wal-Ilam*, 1984). Recreational tourism includes practicing various hobbies such as hunting, diving in the seas, skiing on snow, as well as visiting mountainous and desert areas that bring calmness, comfort, and stability to the soul (H. Robinson, 1985).

**Third: Therapeutic Tourism:** This type of tourism has been defined by the World Tourism Organization as “providing health facilities using the natural resources of the country, especially mineral waters and climate” (Ryan Darwish, 1997, p. 54). Klaus Kollinat defined it as recognized therapeutic tourist locations that include prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of health diseases (Klaus Kollinat, 1991, p. 6).

Therapeutic tourism areas vary according to their therapeutic components and methods of utilization. These areas can be classified as follows:

- Mineral water areas used for drinking or bathing.
- Areas with mineral resources along with their therapeutic climate.
- Areas that exploit seawater for treatment, as found in Sidi Fredj in Algiers.
- Areas with other natural means used for treatment, such as mud and sand burial, as is the case in some desert areas in Algeria like Biskra and Oued Souf.

These areas also possess therapeutic tourism potential, which qualifies them, if properly utilized, to become a major tourist hub in this field. They include many mineral baths, such as Hammam Guelma, Hammam Bouhadjar, Hammam Bouhnia, Hammam Esskhouna in Setif, and Hammam El-Haraiz in Hammam Dhalaa.

**Fourth: Beach Tourism:** Focusing on coastal tourism requires two important elements: security and political

and social stability. The best example of successful beach tourism is Spain.

**Fifth: Desert Tourism:** Desert tourism refers to any tourist stay in a desert environment, based on exploiting various natural, historical, and cultural resources, accompanied by activities related to this environment such as entertainment, recreation, and exploration. The deserts, with their vastness, tranquility, and expanse, are considered a major tourist attraction, drawing many tourists who prefer this type of tourism product.

It is a type of environmental (natural) tourism that takes place in the desert, including its natural features such as groups of sand dunes (ergs, regs), dry valleys, natural oases, and shadows. It also includes human aspects represented by the lifestyle and culture of desert peoples, which harmonize with the nature of the desert to form a unique way of life different from the familiar lifestyles in cities and rural areas. Despite the apparent dryness of the desert, it is characterized by a vast biological diversity represented by a large variety of plants and animals that have adapted to the natural conditions. Deserts have begun to attract tourists seeking peace and tranquility.

It can be said that among these types, the Algerian desert is distinguished by tourism potentials recognized by experts in the tourism field and specialized international organizations, which could make it a global tourism hub. However, this tourism wealth remains exploited only to a small extent, not yet reaching the level that reflects its true status.

Therefore, the desert should be seen not only as a source of oil wealth but as a vast geographical area rich in natural resources, historical heritage, and unique cultural and civilizational assets that qualify it to be a foundation for developing a tourism industry that contributes to diversifying national income sources and overcoming the looming threat of oil depletion in the future. The components of desert tourism have the potential to compete globally in tourism, provided that complementary tourist facilities and services are available, such as increasing accommodation capacity, providing sufficient transportation and communication networks, and especially improving management and administrative mechanisms.

### 3- The Impact of Tourism on Economic and Social Aspects:

Tourism activities form part of the development and vitality of the earth and its neighborhoods through care for nature, its development, and cultivation to enhance its beauty and reach perfection. However, in addition to revitalizing, sustaining, and preserving the earth, there is also an ethical and civilizational responsibility that falls on humans: preserving human achievements and contributions throughout history on this land, some of which have become part of nature itself. These

achievements, which reflect the spirit and culture of their era, constitute the historical and civilizational depth that nations cherish and take pride in. Thus, this study considers one of tourism's priorities to be the revival of cultural, natural, and civilizational heritage in a contemporary manner, moving away from the traditional view of tourism.

Tourism also impacts the environment surrounding the tourist site—whether religious, archaeological, heritage, historical, therapeutic, natural, or recreational—as well as the host country in general. We will address and clarify how tourism affects the economic and social aspects:

#### First: The Impact of Tourism on Economic Aspects

Many countries rely on tourism in their economies due to its economic advantages that contribute to raising the standard of living and increasing prosperity in both industrial and developing countries. Some of these advantages include:

- Increasing income in foreign currencies as a result of selling tourism services;
- Helping to boost economic activity due to the rise in income for households and individuals resulting from tourism;
- Tourism forms an export sector where the consumer comes to the product without the need for international trade operations;
- Tourism represents a part of invisible transactions in the trade balance;
- Tourism promotes development in areas that have not been exploited for tourism, as it tends to focus on regions with unique natural and climatic characteristics, which are often deprived of urban development;
- Tourism increases both production and consumption; thus, prices tend to rise due to the higher standard of living and increased demand for various goods and services;
- Tourism contributes to increasing opportunities for national and foreign investment;
- Tourism contributes to providing job opportunities;
- Tourism stimulates the transportation sector.

Therefore, tourism represents one of the economic sectors in which the human factor is a fundamental element for the operation of tourism activity, unlike industry and agriculture, which can rely more on technological means and reduce the human element. In this regard, studies have confirmed tourism development's ability to absorb unemployment and greatly expand employment opportunities, as it is a labor-intensive industry with a multiplier effect on 70 related and complementary industries and services (Studies by the World Tourism Organization). It is the leading indus-

try in terms of employing labor and has become a key player in economic and social development, as every person working directly in the tourism sector creates new job opportunities by indirectly employing 3.5 people in other sectors.

## Second: The Impact of Tourism on Social Aspects

Many countries have shown interest in the social impacts of tourism on host countries and their citizens, especially since they have recognized the vast differences in customs, traditions, and prevailing values among tourists and the societies they visit. These impacts result from the interaction and mixing between tourists and local populations. Therefore, it is in the interest of the host country to establish a comprehensive tourism policy that combines its own culture with that of the tourists to reduce the psychological gap between the unusual life of tourists and the everyday life of the host community. (Zayed, 2010, p.09)

The social and cultural dimension of tourism can be considered one of the components of the tourism product in tourist countries, as well as a fundamental element in the process of tourism development.

When linking tourism to employment, tourism is a service industry characterized by intensive labor and is an important source of jobs, providing a wide range of employment opportunities across various fields and levels of qualification, both skilled and unskilled. From this perspective, tourism investment in many developing countries is seen as a solution to the unemployment crisis and a stimulus to expand employment opportunities, leading to an improvement in the living and cultural standards of some segments of these societies, which have begun to earn new incomes from this sector.

## 4- Tourism Resources in Algeria and Their Role in Tourist Attraction:

Tourism is considered one of the essential economic sectors for many countries, whether developed or developing. The individual plays the greatest role through continuous awareness rooted in a tourism culture fundamentally based on the necessity of continuously attracting tourists. The tourism heritage and the capabilities and tourist sites owned by the state also play a key role in attracting a large number of tourists. Observing the reality in Algeria, and from our perspective as Algerians, we see that the number of Algerians who leave the country every year, especially every summer, can be counted in the millions. Although statistics may not be precise, this is the reality. Such a fact makes us surprised and prompts us to question the reasons and backgrounds that lead Algerian citizens to leave the beautiful beaches of Béjaïa, the enchanting Skikda, the stunning Oran, and the shores of Jijel, Mostaganem, El Kala, and others—beaches stretching from east to west along a coastline over 1,200 km long—and prefer Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey, and more recently Spain, which has become for years the favorite tourist destination for

Algerians of all financial and social levels. This leads us to question where the tourism sector in Algeria is heading despite all the wealth and advantages Algeria possesses.

A country like Algeria, a regional power, possesses all the qualifications if there were a genuine desire to develop the tourism sector. Do we only have beaches?! In fact, we have religious tourism with ancient and beautiful mosques in Algiers, Oran, Constantine, and others. We have historic churches dating back to the French occupation. We have zawiyas, shrines, and mausoleums. Not only that, we have historical tourism with Roman ruins sprawling from Tipaza and Cherchell to Timgad and Djemila. We have natural tourism, which is the most beautiful in North African countries, including mountains, waterfalls, springs, and thermal baths. We have the enchanting desert, which constitutes the majority of Algeria's area, filled with oases and prehistoric monuments.

**First: Natural Components:** Natural components can be defined as the set of elements that constitute tourist products created by nature, without human intervention in their formation, geographic distribution, or size. They include all natural resources, attractions, and incentives with tourism value. (Bazaazou, 2013, p. 184)

These components form the foundation for tourism development at any tourist site. Additionally, these resources and components provide the basis for the creation and development of tourism products. The province of Babel is rich with diverse and unique tourism resources that are exploitable and viable for investment. The natural components include the following:

**A-Geographical Location:** This refers to the location of a place relative to general geographical phenomena. Geographical location is one of the fundamental subjects due to its strong, multifaceted impact on all fields of human activities. It is not surprising to see that one of the most important stages in preliminary studies for successful tourism development work is the successful selection of the location for tourism projects. (Al-Hawamdeh & Al-Humaidi, n.d., p. 99)

Regarding the natural and geographical characteristics of Algeria, it is located on the southwestern shore of the Mediterranean basin and occupies a central position in the Maghreb, Africa, and the Mediterranean Sea, thanks to its geographical and economic nature, social and cultural characteristics, its unique morphology, its original natural state, and its multiple resources. (Al-Rukaybi, 1999, p. 113).

Its coastline extends approximately 1,200 km. Algeria is one of the largest African countries in terms of area after Sudan, covering an area of 2,381,741 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population exceeding 35 million people. (National Tourism Office). Algeria contains two distinct regions from one another, which are:

✓ **Northern Region:** It includes the hilly and plain areas, which are broader rather than long. It contains the most fertile lands and includes plains and mountains such as the Chelif, Kabylie, Tlemcen, and the Saharan Atlas Mountains, which themselves consist of the Ksour Mountains, Amourian, Ouled Nail, and Akhribane. The Algerian climate is mainly Mediterranean and partly continental, which makes the winters cold and harsh, and the summers hot and dry.

✓ **Mediterranean Climate:** This covers the coastal region from east to west, with an average annual temperature of about 18°C, peaking in July and August at around 30°C. Accordingly, this region's climate is characterized by heat and humidity.

✓ **Semi-Arid Climate:** This covers the high plateaus region and is characterized by a long, sometimes humid, cold season lasting from October to May.

✓ **Southern Saharan Region:** It has three main characteristics: the plateaus called Hammada and Droua; the second is concentrated in the wadis (valleys), which include the Great Western Wadi, the Great Eastern Wadi, and Wadi Chach; the third is the nature of the Hoggar Mountains, which contain the highest peak in Algeria, "Tahat" Peak, at 3,003 meters (Al-Rukaybi, 1999, p. 113)

✓ The climate of the Sahara region is marked by low annual rainfall, not exceeding 500 mm per year, very high daytime temperatures, and low temperatures at night. It is dominated by a dry climate with a long hot season extending from May to September, with temperatures ranging between 40°C and 45°C. The remaining months feature a moderate climate. The vegetation cover mainly consists of palm oases.

## B- Tourist Areas in Algeria:

Six tourist regions can be identified in Algeria based on the diversity of geographical features. (Kawash, p. 222).

✓ **Coastal Region, Northern Plains, and Northern Atlas Highlands:** This region is distinguished by its 1,200 km long coastline and numerous archaeological sites dating back to the Roman era, Muslim Arabs, and even prehistoric times.

✓ **Atlas Mountain Range:** This area contains the highest peak in the north, "Lalla Djidja," at 2,308 meters. It also includes the Aurès Mountains, the Chelif, and a mountain range parallel to the coast with great potential for developing various types of tourism, such as winter sports (skiing, climbing, hunting, etc.).

✓ **High Plateaus Region:** Characterized by its continental climate, archaeological sites, and diverse traditional and artisanal products.

✓ **Saharan Atlas Region:** Located between the high plateaus and the Great Sahara, this region is suitable for developing climatic, mineral, and hunting tourism, among others.

✓ **Desert Oasis Region:** Known for moderate temperatures, which are cooler than the Great Sahara, it hosts numerous palm oases and lakes, as well as several traditional crafts.

✓ **Great Sahara Region:** Also known as the Grand South (Hoggar, Tassili), characterized by vast expanses, towering mountains, and mild temperatures throughout the year. It is an important source of winter tourism. Thanks to the variety of tourist areas and climates in Algeria, this diversity supports the development of many types of tourism and helps prevent tourism activity from being concentrated in a specific season, ensuring continuous tourism activity throughout the year (eliminating seasonality).

**Secondly: Religious Components:** Religious components refer to all places of religious significance, including the tombs and shrines of prophets and saints – the mausoleums. They are not limited to these but also include architectural sites related to Islamic heritage such as mosques, congregational mosques, and palaces. Among the most important mausoleums in Algeria are the tomb of Abd al-Rahman al-Tha'alibi, the tomb of Sidi Muhammad Bou Qabrane, and Sidi Boumediene in Tlemcen.

**Thirdly: Archaeological and Historical Components:** Algeria is considered one of the countries with a rich historical and civilizational heritage, whose roots extend deep into history through the various historical phases of the country. It is characterized by diverse civilizations and archaeological sites representing different civilizations that have passed through Algeria over a long period, leaving varied cultural and social impacts on the community. Among these are the Roman civilization, the Berber civilization, and the Arab-Islamic civilization, which reflect the richness of this precious heritage. (Al-Bashir Shniti, 1984, p. 162).

These components also represent the remnants of ancient civilizations that existed on the earth's surface in the form of archaeological and historical sites. Learning about civilizations and human history through these archaeological landmarks is considered a high intellectual pleasure. (Kafi, 2008, p. 69). Among the most important historical and civilizational sites, and the most magnificent archaeological locations distinguished by the beauty of their ruins and their historical and scientific value, are theaters, ancient cities, and others such as "Timgad," "Tipaza," "Djemila," "Guelma," "Tlemcen," "Adrar Forts," the Hoggar region, and more. Below are some remarkable examples of this richness.

□ The capital city has the historic district of **Casbah**, which was registered as a World Heritage site in 1992 (see the same previous reference). Built by the Ottomans in the 16th century, it represents one of the most beautiful architectural landmarks in the Mediterranean

region. It overlooks a small island that served as a trading site for the Carthaginians during the 4th century BC.

□ Algiers also contains many historical landmarks that testify to the history of the region. Among these historical sites is **Dar Aziza**, a palace built during the Ottoman era to host certain palace guests. There is also the **Ketchaoua Mosque**, which was constructed during the reign of the Turkish Bey Larbi in Algiers over four centuries ago. Additionally, the **Great Mosque** is considered the largest mosque in the capital, built by the Almoravids at the end of the 11th century.

□ The **Hamma Botanical Garden** (or simply Hamma Garden), located in the heart of Algiers, is an actual natural museum. It contains 2,500 plant species, centuries-old trees, more than 25 species of palm trees, as well as gardens designed in classical French and British styles. According to experts, it is considered one of the five most beautiful gardens worldwide, as many of its trees are over a hundred years old, with the first planted in 1848. Currently, efforts are underway to renew the garden's plants and focus on native species, which is the role of botanical gardens, to restore its global status it held fifty years ago.

□ In **M'sila**, there is the **Beni Hammad Fortress**, which is one of the important archaeological sites in Algeria's historical heritage. It contains Roman remains such as walls and ancient tombs, Islamic relics, and artifacts from the Hammadid and Almohad states during their presence in the region.

□ **Timgad**, a city liberated since 1880 and situated at an altitude of 100 meters, once included a theater, 14 thermal baths, administrative headquarters, a public library with a semicircular reading hall, a civic basilica (which served as a courthouse), a Christian cemetery with around 10,000 tombs, markets, shops, and a theater that could seat 3,500 spectators. The **Arch of Triumph**, built in the 2nd century to commemorate Trajan's victory over the Parthians, is considered one of the most beautiful arches of the Roman Empire.

Its temple, built on a raised platform accessible by a staircase of 38 steps, featured a façade with six columns (two of which have been restored). To the southwest of the city, there is a Donatist cathedral and a large Christian monastery. Timgad's authenticity lies in its rich cultural heritage from the 1st to the 3rd centuries. The city had expert architects, designers, and Numidian mosaic artists. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries, three roads were constructed, albeit irregular due to the terrain, alongside new neighborhoods and a theater located at the bottom of the hill.

□ The **Timgad Museum** houses one of the finest collections of mosaics in Algeria.

□ The city has revived its folk art festival, the **"Wedding of the Aurès,"** which lasts two weeks and includes concerts, cultural exhibitions, and handicrafts. The re-

nowned carpet weaving in the Aurès region enjoys worldwide fame and the full honor it deserves.

- **Tipaza**, known as the "Pine Steps," enjoys the charm of cities located between the sea and mountains. This city, situated at the foot of Mount "Chenoua," which is 900 meters high and covered with snow in winter, positioned on a wide coast, was occupied since the Middle Stone Age. It is believed that inhabitants lived in the "Ras El" cave near Chenoua about 12,000 years BC. Many civilizations succeeded there, and thanks to recent excavations, remains of a fortress with walls and a cemetery equipped with a crematorium were discovered. In Tipaza's oldest district, there is the "Judicial Basilica" where the magnificent Slave Mosaic was found, now displayed in the city museum.

- **Djemila** was founded by Emperor Nerva in northeastern Setif, on the edge of the Ferghoua mountains, halfway up a gentle slope toward the confluence of two valleys, Gergour and Battan, where the valleys take the form of flowing waterways. This city, with its temples and basilica buildings located at an altitude of 900 meters, is another vivid example of how Roman urban planning adapted to the environment.

- **Tlemcen El Mansourah**, thanks to its ancient history, is rich with symbols of the Tlemcen region, notably the minaret of the Mansoura Mosque built by the Marinids during the siege of the Zayyanid capital Tlemcen in 1299, and its beautiful nature characterized by fertile soil dominated by olive and cherry trees. Due to Algeria's richness and diversity of its tourism heritage, it has gained an important and ambitious position among political circles to make tourism a significant resource and contributor to development mechanisms, helping the country emerge from isolation to become an important tourism hub.

- **Guelma** is rich with the Roman theater that still stands today as a witness to a past full of great achievements. This theater is truly a masterpiece of architectural engineering, and its importance lies especially in preserving its structure to this day in the same form as thousands of years ago, despite several restoration works. Historians say this important historical monument was built between the 12th and 13th centuries by a city temple nun named Ania Elia Restituta. The construction cost about thirty thousand gold coins. The theater is semicircular in shape and contains several boxes designated for nobles and high-ranking state officials, tiers for the general public, and a wide platform believed to have been used for fights with wild animals, especially lions, which were abundant in the region.

- **Ghardaia:** The M'zab Valley in Ghardaia was also registered as a World Heritage site in 1982 (see Mohamed El Bachir Shniti, 1984, p. 162). Its construction dates back to the 10th century AD. What distinguishes this site is its aesthetic value, surrounded by five forts

with desert-style designs—these are fortified villages with simple architecture suited to the natural environment of the region. Additionally, **Timgad Site:** This Roman archaeological site includes several structures, such as a large theater hosting the "Timgad International Festival" of singing annually, the Arch of Emperor Trajan, the market, and the palace built by the Byzantines. This site was registered as a World Heritage site in 1982 (see Abdullah Shrit and Mohamed Al-Mili, 1988, p. 201). The site, known as "Thamugadi," is located 37 km from the city of Batna, on a Roman road connecting the cities of "Lambèse" and "Tabessa."

- **Adrar** is represented by palaces such as the Palace of Ouled Abdel Samad Deldoul, Palace of Tazoult, etc. The palace is an architectural, residential, social, and political unit. The houses inside it cluster in a cohesive, cumulative way resembling a fortress, surrounded by walls on all sides. The shape of the palaces and houses has not changed noticeably over the past centuries, retaining their original form. Generally, houses are similar and mostly consist of one to three floors with arcades surrounding an open courtyard (the *sahn*), elevated on columns from the ground floor to the upper floor. On the sides of these ground-level arcades, there are rooms arranged according to the space occupied by each house. Simply put, the palace is a cluster of well-aligned houses built in a light brown color made from mud and palm leaves. At the center of these buildings are a market and a mosque. The use of mud is due to the harsh climate; it prevents heat from entering during the hot summers when temperatures exceed 50 degrees Celsius, along with sandstorms. The palace has two gates: a main gate for visitors and a back gate leading to a large courtyard with palm groves.

- **Tamanrasset** is distinguished by the Hoggar Mountains, a famous mountain range located in the far southeast of Algeria in the desert. It has an ancient history stretching deep into time, with old rock murals as evidence. It is globally known for its breathtaking landscapes and captivating charm, with Hoggar mountains hosting some of the highest peaks in Algeria, including Mount Tahat Atakor at 3,013 meters (Ghraïba Khalif, no publication year, p. 86).

- **Illizi** features the Tassili site, considered one of the most important and magnificent global sites in terms of geological nature. This site dates back to 6,000 years BC. Its greatness is reflected in its fossils revealing remains of animals and plants that lived in the area (the Tassili site is a cultural, human, and geological treasure with historical and archaeological value within national and world heritage). It was registered as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1982 (see Nour Eddine Bazin, "World Heritage in the Maghreb Region: A Rich Cultural Heritage"). Tassili also contains engravings on its walls from ancient humans showing their daily activities, as well as depictions indicating that the desert was once rivers and seas. Archaeologists also found fish skeletons and fishing tools.

The current situation of some tourist sites in our desert and other regions has witnessed some damage: in Hoggar, some artifacts have been looted, wildlife hunted to near extinction in the Tassili reserve, and some people have removed parts of rocks to make souvenirs. This is due to a lack of site protection, insufficient awareness campaigns for tourists and local populations.

### 5- Some obstacles facing the tourism sector in Algeria:

One criticism of the employment pattern in this sector is the high number of employees at the administrative level, while employment standards in this sector indicate that this ratio should not exceed 7% of the total workforce in the administrative field.

The tourism sector in Algeria also suffers from a lack of qualification among workers in this sector, as most employees do not have a minimum level of qualification, which contributes to the deterioration of the quality of tourism services. According to a study conducted by the World Tourism Organization, the percentage of unqualified labor is estimated at 66% of the total workforce in this sector in Algeria, whereas international standards applied in the tourism sector allow only 20% for this category of labor, due to the sensitivity of this activity and the close link of its services to the human element more than other factors.

The low level of qualification and training among workers in the tourism sector in Algeria is primarily due to the training system not being adapted to the needs of this sector, both in terms of quantity and quality.

Within the framework of training and qualifying human resources, due to their role in managing hotel tourism institutions and improving the quality of services in the tourism sector in Algeria, the sustainable development strategy for tourism included the topic of training in various specializations and levels, starting from senior technician to higher technician, and finally a bachelor's degree in hotel management and tourism. This is done by strengthening the country's existing educational capacity, in addition to introducing the field of tourism economics at universities.

The future of tourism employment in Algeria remains dependent on the development of the tourism sector's status in the state's economic policy, the weight of private investment in this field, and the job opportunities it creates in various scientific and professional specializations related to tourism. (Ashi, 2005, p. 102).

### Conclusion

We have attempted to present this contribution as an exploratory overview of the tourism industry in Algeria, highlighting the natural assets and tourism attractions that Algeria possesses, characterized by diversity as rich as its stunning nature. Algeria holds an important array of tourist resources spread across the north and south, as well as the central, eastern, and

western regions. In addition to the coastal strip known for its beautiful beaches, there are mountain ranges and impressive green forests interspersed with valleys and streams that delight visitors and tourists. Added to this is the vast desert famous for its golden sands and the Tassili mountain range, which is truly an outstanding tourist attraction for foreigners.

Alongside these natural features, Algeria thrives on an ancient history that spans from the Stone Age to successive eras, during which various civilizations left their marks on the country's thought, culture, and ar-

chitectural heritage. Considering all these natural assets and tourism attractions, this study has observed that the tourism industry in Algeria still suffers from stagnation and delay as a tourism destination.

It can be said that tourism development in Algeria has become an inevitable necessity, despite Algeria's oil wealth, which should be utilized to strengthen the infrastructure for developing non-oil economic sectors in order to achieve the principle of sustainable development and to avoid falling into financial crises caused by fluctuations in the oil market.

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