

ALGERIAN SOCIETY: CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS SOCIOHISTORICAL APPROACH

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Abstract: *Algeria is a country in the north of the African continent, occupying a distinct geographical location that gave it unparalleled importance. Like the countries of the world, Algeria knew prehistoric eras, which reach the dawn of the Stone Age, and history also recorded the passage of a number of countries and civilizations, for example: the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Vandals and the Byzantines, Then came the Islamic conquest, as many countries succeeded in the land of Algeria The Islamic state, including the Rust amid state, the underside, the majority, the Fatimid state, the Almoravid state, the Almohad state, and other Islamic countries, followed by Ottoman rule, then French colonialism, up to the independent Algerian state. All of these factors made Algerian society a scene of mixing cultures, making it know a great momentum in terms of different customs, traditions and rituals. Based on the perceptions of DJamal Graid and in response to his call, the need to listen to society and get to know it, given that this approach imposes itself and calls for the establishment of a sociology stemming from the specificity of society, we try through our work to establish this For an approach to understanding the sociological reality of Algerian society through Researching its history in terms of the customs and traditions of society and its social and linguistic structure*

Keywords: customs and traditions, Algerian society, Algerian, Africa, Arabs.

1. Introduction

Research on the subject of customs and traditions in Algerian society is considered one of the important and controversial topics for several considerations, including:

- The geographical location occupied by the Algerian state, which made it occupy an important position throughout the ages and be a gateway to the African continent.
- The geographical location that characterizes Algeria made it an important area for transit and for trade exchange with the countries of the Levant or with European countries.
- Algeria, throughout history, has known the succession of many civilizations, which made it a country that knows a great momentum of customs and traditions, which have a historical and civilizational extension that expresses certain periods of time.
- Algeria has a very large area and a different topography of beaches, plains, plateaus, and deserts, all of which are factors that make customs and traditions differ from one region to another in the same country.
- Many factors have made talking about the subject of customs and traditions an important topic in sociological discourse and discussion and a provocation in historical and anthropological research.

Therefore, the subject of customs and traditions has a privileged position among the subjects of the study of the country of Algeria, as it is rich in its information and diverse in its vocabulary. Here comes the importance. The topic is to discuss it and delve into its minute details, and because the topic of customs and traditions is very broad, we decided to talk about language, customs of dress and cooking, especially those with an Arab influence.

2. Algeria geographical location.

The word Libya or Lobia in ancient history was applied to the four countries of North Africa: Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Al-Aqsa Morocco. ecosiom meaning Pigeon Islands, and the Romans kept this name and called it Ecozim (Yahya Ben Bouaziz, 2009: 13) One of the clearest

accounts in naming the city Algeria is that there were large rocks in front of its shores resembling islands, and from it the city was called Algeria.

Almost in the tenth century AD, the Bani Mazghna tribes settled on these islands and rocks, so the town was attribute to that, and its name became Algeria Bani Mazghna.

And it kept the name until the 16th century AD, when the Ottoman Turks abbreviated the name, and the name of the city became the name of the state, Algeria. (Yahya Ben Bouaziz, 2009: 14). As for the Arabs, they violated this designation and called the region the Maghreb country, and called Algeria the Middle Maghreb. (Yahya Ben Bouaziz, 2009: 14)

Algeria mediates the regions of northwestern Africa and is border on the north by the Mediterranean Sea, on the east by Tunisia and Libya, on the south by Niger, Mali and Mauritania, and on the west by Morocco. (Yahya Ben Bouaziz, 2009: 16)

Figure 1: A map showing the geographical location of Algeria



3. The structure of Algerian society.

Talking about the structure of Algerian society prompts us to search for the origins of this society and is older than its inhabitants, as many historical studies prove that the Berbers are older than the inhabitants of the Maghreb, meaning that the Berbers are the original inhabitants, although there are many accounts to explain this designation:

They traced the origin of the word VARVAROS, meaning incomprehensible speech, back to the Roman civilization and launched the term BARBAR on all peoples that do not speak Latin. And in another narration, you see that the origin of the word is Arabic and goes back to the great-grandfather...There are many narrations, but they agree that it is an imported designation and does not stem from the essence of the population.

As for the word Amazigh, it is one of the Arabic names in the Levantine folklore, and it is an Arabic name at its core. (Othman Saadi, 2007, p. 3) And Amazigh means the free man.

Algerian heritage is a complex field in which many cultural varieties and sub-cultures overlap, thanks to the multiplicity of ethnic units and human groups and the multiplicity of cultures that participated in building the edifice of the Algerian cultural field, and making it characterized by diversity.

These ethnic units and human groups are:

- The Kabyles: They are the inhabitants of Djerjara and Soumam.
- Chaouia: inhabitants of the Aures and eastern Algeria.
- Beni M'zab: They are Berber groups living in the "M'zab" steppe.
- Tuareg: spread in southern Algeria,
- Arabs: They are the category that arrived in North Africa during the Islamic conquests, then merged with the indigenous population and spread to the rest of Algeria.
- Al-Shinawi: They are located in the Shinawa Mountains in the state of Tipaza.
- Al-Shalah: They are present in Tlemcen, the city of Al-Bayd, and in the high plateaus in the southwest to the Algerian-Moroccan border. (Ahmed Al-Sulaymani: 43)

4. Customs and traditions of Algerian society

Algerian society is characterized by cultural diversity, and a multi-component cultural identity, due to the expansion of the geographical area and the ethnic and cultural mixing that the region experienced, the most important of which is the cross-fertilization of the Amazigh cultures and the Arab-Islamic culture, which resulted in a variety or the Algerian social structure, with its momentum and richness in customs and traditions as a result of cultural friction with many peoples' civilizations. Talking about the customs and traditions known to Algerian society prompts us to search for many elements that formed, so to speak, social laws and constants, that contributed to the support of social bonds, which were manifested in manifestations and customs that characterized society in every period, and among these customs and traditions we decided to talk About language, dress and cuisine, this habits that formed part of the social heritage that still exists in many aspects of life to this day.

In our discussion of the customs and traditions that were the result of the Arab and Amazigh cultural mixing, we find the issue of language presenting itself with urgency. How not when the Arabic language has become an official language used by the Algerian in his daily life.

4.1. Language

Language is part of the cultures of peoples, where they are used as a means to express their cultural identity in a way that distinguishes them from other groups, and even among speakers of one language we often find some differences in the use of that language and each of these differences is used to distinguish some subgroups from others within the framework the culture the broader, for example, the language of Algerian society and its various dialects, which indicate the affiliation of each group to a specific side or a sub-culture within the overall culture.

Algerian society has known throughout its history several transformations, due to the cross-pollination of different cultures, so that cultural friction left its imprints and effects, especially on its local language, in addition to the Arabic language, which has become an official language of the country the French occupier changed his socio-linguistic reality. The linguistic reality in Algerian society after independence until the present time is characterized by a linguistic dichotomy between the local language and the French language, and even its local language is characterized by plurality.

The linguistic space in Algeria is a mixture of the following languages and dialects:

- 1 - Standard Arabic language.
- 2- The modern Arabic language.
- 3- The Algerian Arabic dialects.
- 4- The Berber languages, which include Tamazight, Shilha, Mozabite, Zanatiya, and Chaoui. (Bariha Sharifah, 2015: 134)

However, the linguistic field in Algerian society includes the largest number of Arabic speakers in its various dialects, with an overlap between it and the French language.

This linguistic space of Algerian society differs among Algerian interlocutors according to the geographical regions and the cultural diversity that exists from one side to the other along the Algerian territory.

Numerous studies also prove that formed the Amazigh language as a result of the influence of the Arab language, as he presents in his book Othman Saadi, whose title is The Dictionary of Arabic Roots of Amazigh Words, many examples that illustrate this issue.

Among them, we mention: (examples illustrating the compatibility of Berber with Arab languages)

- Agrum: Bread and gharam is a type of bread in Yemen
- Adhan: disease, and in Arabic dengue.
- Arid: the road, and in Arabic, the post, the distance between two trips.

- Amrar: Mountain, Arabic from the names of the bitter mountain. (Othman Saadi: 4)
- And the examples are many...

Historian William Langer acknowledges that the Berber language and the Arabic language descend from one origin. (Othman Saadi: 5)

Also, the Amazigh language used Arabic letters for writing during the Islamic conquest period, because the Tifinagh script is almost primitive and did not develop, while the Berbers, students of the French Academy, believe that the Latin letter is the most appropriate.

And from it, we can say that the Arab influence on Algerian society extends in history, as we do not limit it to the entry of Arabic into Algeria during the period of Islamic conquests, but rather to prehistoric times. (Osman Saadi: 17).

4.2. Dress

Algeria knows a great diversity and richness in customs related to dress, whether they relate it to women's clothing or men's clothing, which differs from one region to another. Al-Taraqi... And others, and many examples.

It made the great diversity of the Algerian dress known over the times and civilizations that followed Algeria through the interaction of the individual with his environment and by being influenced by the civilizations that he passed through.

And if we choose in this place to talk about men's clothing.

The dress of the Algerian man: According to what William Spencer mentions, the traditional dress of the North African man was a wide, loose dress, the sides of which were connected with sleeves and a hood, sometimes called in Algeria Bernosa, in addition to an undergarment.

And in his book, *The Mirror*, Hamdan Khoja describes the men's clothing as being made of black wool, woven by women, and has the shape of a bag with holes pierced in the middle for the head to come out, and it has two other holes for the hands, and the rich add another garment to it, which is the burnos. (Hamdan bin Othman Khoja, 1980: 23)

Numerous historical research also mentions clothing models that were the result of the influence of Algerians on the customs and dress of Arab Muslims, including:

Djellaba: the djellaba or djellaba, and it is close to the Arabic term jilbab, and it is a lower garment with stripes that has short and wide sleeves, and they commonly used it among the Berbers in difficult seasons. As for the rich, it is made of thinner fabrics and can be made of white wool. (George Marcais p.14)

And the next picture shows the dress of the djellaba.

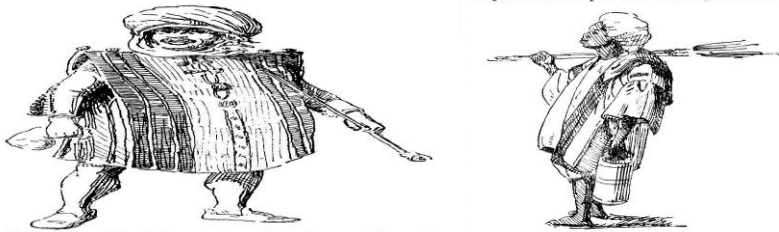
Figure2 : Shows the dress of the djellaba.



Source: G. Marcais, *The costume of musulman d'Alger*. Paris: Librairie Plon, p14

Abaya: A short dress that reaches the knee, worn with slippers made of coarse wool, and decorated with alternating lines between light and dark. The next picture shows that. (George Marçais: 14)

Figure 3: Shows the dress of the Abaya.



The burnous: It is a garment that is placed on the shoulders in a circular shape that reaches the knee. It has a square-shaped hood attached to it from the back and has the same material from which the burnous was made. It is also decorated with a ribbon on the chest area to bring the two parts of the burnous together. The following picture shows that. (George Marçais: 21)

Figure 4 : Shows the dress of the burnous.



Source: G. Marçais, *The costume of musulman d'Alger*. Paris: Librairie Plon, p14

4.3. The kitchen

People choose, acquire, preserve and prepare foods as a complete social and cultural event. Eating as a social, biological act is linked to the cultural heritage of societies and is an element like other cultural elements: music, dance, dress, architectural style...And other elements that reflect the cultural identity of every human society.

They closely linked Algerian cuisine to the production of land and sea, and has ancient Berber origins consisting of herbs, grains, and fresh or dried vegetables, which are still welcomed to this day in the countryside.

Then, with the advent of the Islamic civilization, Levantine and Andalusian recipes were transmitted to him, then the entry of the Turks enriched him with multiple dishes such as grills and sweets. And do not forget some derivations from Spanish cuisine, Italian cuisine, and French cuisine.

Historians agree that Ziryab is the one who has the credit for transferring many Eastern cooking and eating habits to the Islamic Maghreb. (Horiya Sherid, 2010: 48) Also, new customs entered Morocco in the Islamic era related to the arrangement of food on the table and how to

prepare it, as people from the general classes began to work on developing table etiquette and its types. (Horia Sherid, 2010: 40)

There was also a special arrangement for the dining room, where in the back section there is a place for placing food and serving it alternately. (Horia Sherid, 2010: 50), where new arrangements entered the Maghreb that its people did not know, and the following picture shows an Algerian family gathering around the dining table.

Figure 4 : Shows an Algerian table



Source: Houriya Sherid: *The development of the Arab kitchen and its equipment from the Almoravid era to the end of the Ottoman era* (historical and archaeological study).

Moroccan cuisine also acquired new habits in the Islamic era, such as the demand for spices coming from the East and sugar cane. Talking about the customs and traditions known to the Algerian society, which was the result of the Arab influence on the region, is an exciting and provocative topic for research and writing, and we cannot give it its due, but rather it needs more writing, research and analysis, and what we have presented in this work It is simple stations that may be harbingers of deeper and larger actions and size.

5.Conclusion

The succession of various civilizations in the North African region throughout history had an impact on the local cultures, due to the continuous changes and transformations that their societies experienced in terms of cross-pollination, ethnic homogeneity, and cultural mixing. Middle East, Algeria.

Customs and traditions are an important part of this cultural structure, which reflects in its various details, rituals, myths and narratives the story of the interaction of the Algerian individual with his environment and with the civilizations that he passed through, to find ourselves in front of a society that knows a great diversity and momentum of customs and traditions that differ in country from one region to another.

Among the conclusions reached by the research:

Due to the succession of the peoples that occupied and settled Algeria and their different races and places of origin, this led to the diversity and different customs and traditions.

As a result of :

- the cultural accumulations in Algeria, the customs and traditions of the people of Algeria are rich in their social and cultural nature.
- Algeria's formative nature (social structure) led to a state of societal mixing and fusion in language, culture, customs, and traditions.
- we have distinguished Algeria since the Islamic conquest by carrying the banner of the Islamic religion and defending it. This reflects the originality of Algerian society.

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