

Title: Algeria and Turkey: A Study of Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Scientific Research

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Received: 12.01.2025 Accepted: 02.03.2025 Publishing: 14.05.2025 Doi: 10.56334/sei/8.4.43¹

Abstract

This research paper aims to explore the deep-seated historical foundations and contemporary advancements of Algerian-Turkish relations, emphasizing their significance in geopolitical shifts within the Maghreb and the broader Islamic world. **Methods:** The study utilizes a historical analysis approach, examining archival documents and recent diplomatic engagements to understand the evolution of these relations from the early 16th century to present times. **Results:** Recent enhancements in Algerian-Turkish relations are evident in increased economic, investment, educational, and cultural cooperation. The paper specifically highlights advancements in scientific research and cultural cooperation, underscoring how these domains benefit from and contribute to the historical and educational bonds shared by the two nations. **Conclusions:** The strengthened ties between Algeria and Turkey not only reinforce their strategic relationships but also have the potential to establish a stabilizing and developmental axis within the region. This enduring partnership showcases a legacy of bilateral alliance and mutual support, pivotal for regional stability and cooperation.

Keywords: Algeria; Turkey; Cooperation; Strategic Relations Stability; Scientific Research.

Introduction:

The recent rapprochement between Algeria and Turkey might appear as a novelty, a response to the current political dynamics of the Middle East. However, the roots of their relationship stretch back to a pivotal historical moment in 1519, when the Ottoman Empire conquered Algeria. This event coincided with the Spanish-led European expansion across the Mediterranean and North Africa, marking a significant epoch in Algerian-Turkish ties.

The tradition of regular consultations between the President of Algeria and his Turkish counterpart epitomizes the diplomatic practices that have linked the two nations, underlining a partnership that remains resilient despite occasional differences. These dialogues do not merely serve to resolve issues but also open new avenues for further cooperation.

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Citation. Benani H. (2025). Algeria and Turkey: A Study of Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Scientific Research. *Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems*, 8(4), 420-427; doi: 10.56352/sei/8.4.43. <https://imcra-az.org/archive/362-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-4-volvi-2025.html>

Over the years, Algerian-Turkish relations have evolved to become more robust, extending beyond mere economic or diplomatic engagements to include cultural interactions and higher education collaborations, spurred by a shared historical narrative. This expansion into various cooperation areas signifies the depth and breadth of their bilateral relations.

This research paper delves into the bilateral efforts aimed at fostering greater cultural ties and enhancing scientific research exchanges. It raises a critical question: To what extent does cooperation in cultural and educational sectors contribute to the fortification of Algerian-Turkish relations?

Hypothesis:

The historical depth of Algerian-Turkish relations has significantly contributed to the flourishing of various cooperation areas, particularly in cultural and scientific sectors.

This study will be addressed in two sections:

- _ The first section provides an overview of the relations between the two countries and the leaders' commitment to developing them further.
- _ The second section explores the facets of Algerian-Turkish cooperation in cultural and educational domains.

1. Historical Roots and Comprehensive Partnership Between Algeria and Turkey:

When examining the dynamics between two nations, understanding their historical underpinnings and evolutionary trajectory, shaped by various factors, is crucial. These elements can either fortify or weaken the bonds between countries over time.

1.1 Overview of Algerian-Turkish Relations:

The relationship between Algeria and Turkey is robust, tracing back five centuries to the Ottoman era. Algeria was part of the Ottoman Empire from 1519 until the French colonization in 1830. This long-standing historical connection laid the groundwork for future interactions between the two nations.

Post-independence, in 1962, Turkey was among the first to establish diplomatic ties with Algeria, opening its embassy there in 1963. This act marked the commencement of a renewed phase of relations. Since 2006, economic interactions between Algeria and Turkey have surged, underscored by numerous bilateral agreements spanning various sectors.

Today, Algeria is not only Turkey's largest trading partner in Africa but also a pivotal investment destination for Turkish businesses. The tourism sector also highlights the interconnectivity of the two nations, with Turkey serving as a favorite vacation spot for tens of thousands of Algerian tourists annually.

The expatriate communities further cement these ties, with approximately 7,000 Turks residing in Algeria, predominantly in the iron, steel, textile, and construction industries, and about 40,000 Algerians living in Turkey. These communities contribute to the socio-economic fabric of their respective host countries, enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation.

Described as "excellent" and progressively strengthening, the relations between Algeria and Turkey benefit from both regional and international developments. These dynamics encourage both countries to deepen their political, economic, security, and cultural ties. Turkey particularly views Algeria as a strategic gateway to the Maghreb and the broader African continent, given Algeria's status as Turkey's prime trading partner in the region.

1.2 Official Efforts to Reinvigorate and Enhance Algerian-Turkish Joint Cooperation:

In a move to elevate their bilateral relations, Algeria and Turkey have resolved to enhance cooperation across all sectors. A significant milestone was achieved during the visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to Algeria, where a joint declaration was signed to establish a high-level cooperation council. This visit, the first by a president to Algeria under the leadership of Mr. Abdelmadjid Tebboune, underscores the commitment of both nations to forge a deeper and more comprehensive partnership.

Economically, the Algerian President accepted an invitation from the Turkish President to visit Turkey, where the first meeting of the high-level cooperation council will be held. This landmark meeting is anticipated to significantly elevate Algerian-Turkish relations, equating them to Algeria's historical trade relations with major European countries like France, Italy, Spain, and even South Africa at the continental level in Africa¹.

During this meeting, the presidents concurred on an ambitious objective to increase bilateral trade to exceed five billion dollars in the foreseeable future. President Tebboune articulated a keen interest in leveraging Turkey's economic model, which has emerged as one of the most robust economies outside the European Union. This interest is particularly focused on the small and medium enterprise sector, which Mr. Tebboune views as pivotal for diversifying the Algerian economy beyond its traditional reliance on hydrocarbons.

Turkey's strategic view of Algeria as its "second largest partner in Africa" underscores the importance of this relationship. President Erdoğan emphasized the urgency of initiating talks to establish a free trade area between the two countries, stating, "It is necessary to start negotiations without delay to establish a free trade area between the two countries."

The impact of Turkish investments in Algeria is profound, having created over 30,000 jobs for Algerian workers through 377 Turkish investment projects. This makes Algeria the third largest host of Turkish company operations globally².

Furthermore, both nations have instituted several agreements in areas such as investment promotion and protection, consumer protection, quality control of products and services, labor, employment, and social security. There is also a memorandum of understanding focused on the enhancement of scientific research and technology cooperation.

2. Algerian-Turkish Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Higher Education:

Algerian-Turkish relations in the fields of culture and education are historical and deep-rooted, particularly in the cultural aspect. This goes back to the historical period that linked Algeria and Turkey during the Ottoman era. In recent years, the leaderships of both countries have sought to further strengthen these ties.

¹ - Abdelhafid, Sajal. 2020. "Erdoğan's Visit: High-Level Cooperation and a Free Trade Area Soon Between Algeria and Turkey." Available at: <https://3w.noonpast.com>. Accessed on: April 4, 2023, at 23:15.

² - Abdelhafid, Sajal. 2020. "Erdoğan's Visit: High-Level Cooperation and a Free Trade Area Soon Between Algeria and Turkey."

2.1 Cultural Aspect:

Today, Algerian-Turkish cooperation extends beyond traditional dialogues on mutual international and regional issues. It now encompasses economic, cultural, social, and higher educational sectors, underscoring a relationship that is increasingly dynamic and robust.

The Algerian ambassador to Turkey, Murad Adjabi, underscored this evolving dynamic, remarking¹: "Our countries have a historical opportunity to enhance relations, which can serve as a paradigm reflecting the strong political will of the leaders of two prominent Islamic nations." Ambassador Adjabi stressed the necessity of creating a shared narrative that genuinely reflects their mutual history, particularly focusing on the Ottoman period from 1516 to 1830. He stated, "It is time for us to rewrite our shared history ourselves, relying on our historians and references, especially the Ottoman archives. The shared history of our nations has been predominantly documented by Western historians."

These statements were made during a virtual seminar organized by the "ORSAM" Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Turkey, which deliberated on the future prospects of Algerian-Turkish relations. Recent developments have opened new avenues for collaboration, particularly in the cultural sector. During the seminar, the Turkish Ambassador, Mahinur Ozdemir Goktas, expressed a significant interest in filming parts of the historical series "Barbaros" in Algeria, identifying it as a crucial site in the narrative of the famed Ottoman sailor.

In an interview with Echourouk News, Ambassador Ozdemir Goktas highlighted the profound and rich cultural heritage shared between Ankara and Algeria, dating back to the arrival of the Barbarossa brothers in 1516. She advocated for this rich history to be showcased through joint cinematic projects. Expanding on potential cinematic collaborations, the Ambassador suggested that the life of Prince Abdelkader, who lived in Bursa, could serve as another focal point for shared historical storytelling.

The ambassador also noted that cooperation in the audiovisual sector could play a crucial role in revitalizing the Algerian cinema scene, which flourished during the 1970s and 1980s². Historically, both nations agreed to establish cultural centers on each other's territories, a Turkish cultural center in Algeria and an Algerian cultural center in Turkey, aimed at promoting mutual cultural and linguistic understanding and strengthening interpersonal connections between their peoples.

The role of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), which commenced its operations in 2015, was particularly highlighted by the Turkish ambassador. TIKA has been instrumental in the restoration of several Ottoman-era historical sites in Algeria, including the Ketchaoua Mosque in the capital and the Bey's Palace in Oran³.

These restoration projects are part of broader efforts to appreciate and preserve the shared cultural heritage. Beyond restoration, TIKA's initiatives include plans for establishing a children's museum.

The dynamism in cultural cooperation also extends to the organization of joint symposiums and seminars. For instance, TIKA collaborated with the Algerian National Archive to host the Fourth International Symposium on the Algerian-Turkish Shared Heritage at Batna University. This symposium not only celebrated the fraternal ties dating back to ancient times but also explored the extensive shared history and collaborative endeavors in various domains.

¹ - Abdelhafid, Sajal. 2021. "Algerian-Turkish Cooperation: Partnership in Culture and the African Market." Available at: nonnpost.com. Accessed on: April 4, 2023, at 23:48.

² - Ammar, Kardoud. 2022. "Turkey and Algeria: Political Convergence and Promising Prospects in Various Fields." Available at: <https://africanews.dz>. Accessed on: February 11, 2023, at 19:30.

³ - "Prospects of Turkish-Algerian Relations." 2020. Available at: <https://3w.orsam.org.tr>. Accessed on: April 5, 2023, at 00:30.

Abdelmadjid Cheikh, the Director of the Algerian Government Archives, in his address at the symposium, emphasized the continuous efforts to illuminate the complexities of the Ottoman period in Algeria¹.

He noted that this symposium was the fourth of its kind, with previous ones held in Turkey, highlighting the ongoing commitment to correct misconceptions about the historical relationship between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire. These efforts are crucial in fostering a more accurate understanding and appreciation of the shared past between the two nations.

2.2 Higher Education and Scientific Research Aspect:

Turkey's ambassador to Algeria, Mahinur Ozdemir, highlighted the profound connections between the two nations in cultural and educational spheres, encompassing both academic research and general education. There is a marked enthusiasm among Algerians for Turkish language and culture, evidenced by significant educational engagements and cultural exchanges.

In Algeria, the Turkish community numbers around 25,000, comprising both permanent residents and those temporarily in Algeria for work or other reasons. This community plays a pivotal role in strengthening the bilateral relations between the two countries.

The interest in academic pursuits extends to Algerians who are increasingly opting to study at Turkish universities on a self-funded basis. Notably, the University of Constantine houses a department dedicated to Turkish language and literature.

In a bid to further cultural exchange and educational cooperation, a Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center is set to open in Algeria, alongside a center for Algerian culture in Turkey. Additionally, addressing the educational needs of the Turkish community in Algeria, a branch of the Turkish Maarif Schools will soon be established.

During the Fourth International Symposium on the Algerian-Ottoman Shared Heritage, the former Minister of Higher Education, Ben Ziyane, underscored the unique historical ties that link the two countries. He pointed out that bilateral cooperation transcends economic interactions, extending significantly into the realms of scientific research and academic exchange.

Between 2017 and 2019, approximately 15,500 individuals, including university professors, researchers, administrative staff, and doctoral students, benefited from short-term scientific exchanges abroad.

Several Algerian universities have launched specializations in Ottoman studies, contributing to the promotion of the shared cultural and historical heritage. This academic initiative is supported by numerous cooperation agreements with Turkish institutions, totaling about 140 agreements.

Further cementing these educational ties, the Turkish language departments at Saad Dahlab University (Algiers 02) and Prince Abdelkader University in Constantine have been instrumental in training hundreds of graduates in this field. Additionally, the inauguration of the first laboratory dedicated to Ottoman heritage in Algeria highlights the ongoing efforts to explore and celebrate the commonalities between the Algerian and Turkish peoples.

In a significant meeting, Prime Minister Ayman Abdel Rahman conferred with the President of the Turkish Higher Education Council, Erol Ozvar, who visited Algeria to discuss further cooperation

¹ - "Algerian-Turkish International Symposium on the Shared Algerian-Ottoman Historical Heritage." 2022. Available at: <https://3w.tika.gov.tr>. Accessed on: April 4, 2023, at 00:00

between universities of both countries. The statement from the Algerian Prime Minister's office reflected a mutual desire to deepen these educational and scientific relationships, stating, "the discussions showed the desire of both sides to develop relations, especially in aspects related to higher education and scientific research, supporting the development goals of both countries and enhancing their bilateral partnership".¹

During a significant visit by a Turkish delegation to Algeria, following an invitation from the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, a series of strategic scientific cooperation agreements were signed. Istanbul University formed pacts with nine Algerian universities, marking a substantial step in bilateral academic relations². The delegation comprised high-profile figures, including the President of the Higher Education Council and the President of Istanbul University, along with several other university presidents.

In a revealing statement, the President of the Higher Education Council articulated that the primary objective of this visit was to elevate the collaborative efforts in higher education to a new zenith. He highlighted the upcoming advancements, stating that the cooperation would soon encompass a broad spectrum of activities, including scientific research, development of technological parks, scientific publishing, and the exchange of faculty members and students.

Both Algerian and Turkish parties consented to deepen their collaborative efforts, specifically focusing on scientific and technological disciplines. They agreed to reorganize their cooperative efforts through research projects aligned with the developmental priorities of both nations, founded on a mutual benefit principle. Additionally, there was a mutual interest in organizing study days to explore the dynamics between universities and the business sector. These sessions would involve Turkish companies operating in Algeria or could be conducted via remote conferencing technologies for companies based in Turkey³.

Furthering these educational ties, the Turkish Ambassador visited the University of Oran for Science and Technology. During this visit, further agreements were forged, particularly in training sectors, capitalizing on the presence of Turkish companies in Oran.

The scope of cooperation also broadened to include the tourism and hospitality sectors. Through initiatives spearheaded by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency "TIKA" in partnership with the Algerian Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts, a program titled "Modern Approaches in Tourism Education in Algeria" was launched. This initiative aims to enhance the training of students from higher schools of tourism, integrating modern educational methodologies into the curriculum⁴.

Approximately 35 specialists engaged in tourism education from Algeria's Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts and the Ministry of Vocational Education participated in a training session titled "Modern Approaches in Tourism Education." This program, orchestrated by TIKA along with the General Directorate of Vocational Education at the Turkish Ministry of National Education, aimed to elevate the proficiency of Algerian tourism educators.

The training encompassed a diverse array of subjects, including "The General Structure of Professional Tourism Education in Turkey," "Practices Related to Tourism Education in Some European Countries,"

¹ - "Turkish-Algerian Discussions Address Cooperation Between Universities of Both Countries." 2022. Available at: <https://3w.aa.com>. Accessed on: February 12, 2023, at 21:00.

² - "Turkey and Algeria Sign Agreements on Cooperation in Higher Education and Scientific Research." 2022. Available at: <https://3w.dailysabah.com>. Accessed on: April 5, 2023, at 19:20.

³ - "Algeria-Turkey: Reviewing Ways to Enhance Bilateral Cooperation in Higher Education and Scientific Research." 2023. Available at: <https://3w.aps.dz>. Accessed on: April 5, 2023, at 19:05.

⁴ - "TIKA Supports Tourism Education in Algeria." Available at: <https://3w.tika.gov.tr>. Accessed on: April 4, 2023, at 00:15:19:30.

"Alternative Tourism," "Tourism Schools and Hotel Management in Turkey," and "Types of Tourism in Turkey." The objective of this extensive training was to enhance the skills and expertise of Algerian tourism professionals, leveraging Turkey's renowned leadership in the sector.

Conclusion:

The relationship between Algeria and Turkey is deeply rooted and has developed over many years, culminating in robust partnerships and collaborative efforts across various domains, most prominently in scientific research and cultural exchanges. This collaboration, while comparatively recent, broadens the traditional economic focus typically seen in international partnerships.

The Algerian-Turkish ties have evolved beyond mere economic interactions, with Turkey keen on expanding these relations to include as many sectors as possible. Indeed, the cooperative ventures in the cultural and higher education realms are crucial areas where Algeria can gain substantially from Turkey's expertise. Fields such as tourism, hospitality, film production, cultural centers, and scientific research stand out as key areas for development.

By investing in the training of Algerian professionals, including educators, researchers, and students, both nations can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures and scientific advancements. Moreover, the promotion and exportation of Algerian culture and heritage, facilitated by mutual scientific and cultural missions, have the potential to attract Turkish tourists and investors, thereby enriching the bilateral ties between these two nations.

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